

(e) Any population of an endangered species or a threatened species determined by the Secretary to be an experimental population in accordance with this subpart shall be identified by special rule in §§ 17.84–17.86 as appropriate and separately listed in § 17.11(h) (wildlife) or § 17.12(h) (plants) as appropriate.

(f) The Secretary may designate critical habitat as defined in section (3)(5)(A) of the Act for an essential experimental population as determined pursuant to paragraph (c)(2) of this section. Any designation of critical habitat for an essential experimental population will be made in accordance with section 4 of the Act. No designation of critical habitat will be made for nonessential populations. In those situations where a portion or all of an essential experimental population overlaps with a natural population of the species during certain periods of the year, no critical habitat shall be designated for the area of overlap unless implemented as a revision to critical habitat of the natural population for reasons unrelated to the overlap itself.

§ 17.82 Prohibitions.

Any population determined by the Secretary to be an experimental population shall be treated as if it were listed as a threatened species for purposes of establishing protective regulations under section 4(d) of the Act with respect to such population. The Special rules (protective regulations) adopted for an experimental population under § 17.81 will contain applicable prohibitions, as appropriate, and exceptions for that population.

§ 17.83 Interagency cooperation.

(a) Any experimental population designated for a listed species (1) determined pursuant to § 17.81(c)(2) of this subpart not to be essential to the survival of that species and (2) not occurring within the National Park System or the National Wildlife Refuge System, shall be treated for purposes of section 7 (other than subsection (a)(1) thereof) as a species proposed to be listed under the Act as a threatened species.

(b) Any experimental population designated for a listed species that either (1) has been determined pursuant to

§ 17.81(c)(2) of this subpart to be essential to the survival of that species, of (2) occurs within the National Park System or the National Wildlife Refuge System as now or hereafter constituted, shall be treated for purposes of section 7 of the Act as a threatened species. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any biological opinion prepared pursuant to section 7(b) of the Act and any agency determination made pursuant to section 7(a) of the Act shall consider any experimental and nonexperimental populations to constitute a single listed species for the purposes of conducting the analyses under such sections.

§ 17.84 Special rules—vertebrates.

(a) Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger cinereus*). (1) The Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel population identified in paragraph (a)(6) of this section is a nonessential experimental population.

(2) No person shall take this species, except:

(i) For educational purposes, scientific purposes, the enhancement of propagation or survival of the species, zoological exhibition, and other conservation purposes consistent with the Act and in accordance with applicable State fish and wildlife conservation laws and regulations; or

(ii) Incidental to recreational activities.

(3) Any violation of applicable State fish and wildlife conservation laws or regulations with respect to the taking of this species (other than incidental taking as described in paragraph (a)(2)(ii) of this section) will also be a violation of the Endangered Species Act.

(4) No person shall possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, ship, import, or export by any means whatsoever, any such species taken in violation of these regulations or in violation of applicable State fish and wildlife laws or regulations or the Endangered Species Act.

(5) It is unlawful for any person to attempt to commit, solicit another to commit, or cause to be committed, any offense defined in paragraph (a)(2) or (4) of this section.

(6) The site for reintroduction of Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel is totally isolated from existing populations of

this species. The nearest extant population is in the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge approximately 50 miles from the reintroduction site. The reintroduction site is within the historic range of this species and is located at the Assawoman Wildlife Area, Sussex County, Delaware. Observation of previous releases have shown that fox squirrels have not traveled more than 2 or 3 miles from release sites, therefore, the possibility of this population contacting extant wild populations is unlikely.

(7) The reintroduced population will be checked periodically to determine its condition and the success of the reintroduction. Of special concern will be the establishment of breeding pairs and the reproductive success of the population. The movement patterns of the released individuals and the overall health of the population will also be observed.

(b) Colorado squawfish (*Ptychocheilus lucius*) and woundfin (*Plagopterus argentissimus*). (1) The Colorado squawfish and woundfin populations identified in paragraph (b)(6) of this section, are experimental, nonessential populations.

(2) No person shall take the species, except in accordance with applicable State or Tribal fish and wildlife conservation laws and regulations in the following instances:

(i) For educational purposes, scientific purposes, the enhancement of propagation or survival of the species, zoological exhibition, and other conservation purposes consistent with the Act; or

(ii) Incidental to otherwise lawful activities, provided that the individual fish taken, if still alive, is immediately returned to its habitat.

(3) Any violation of applicable State or Tribal fish and wildlife conservation laws or regulations with respect to the taking of this species (other than incidental taking as described in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section) will also be a violation of the Endangered Species Act.

(4) No person shall possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, ship, import, or export, by any means whatsoever, any such species taken in violation of these regulations or in violation of applica-

ble State or Tribal fish and wildlife laws or regulations.

(5) It is unlawful for any person to attempt to commit, solicit another to commit, or cause to be committed, any offense defined in paragraphs (b) (2) through (4) of this section.

(6) All of the sites for reintroduction of Colorado squawfish and woundfin are totally isolated from existing populations of these species. The nearest population of Colorado squawfish is above Lake Powell in the Green and Colorado Rivers, an upstream distance of at least 800 miles including 6 mainstream dams, and 200 miles of dry riverbed. Woundfin are similarly isolated (450 miles distant, 200 miles of dry streambed and 5 mainstream dams). All reintroduction sites are within the probable historic range of these species and are as follows:

Colorado Squawfish

(i) *Arizona: Gila County.* Salt River from Roosevelt Dam upstream to U.S Highway 60 bridge.

(ii) *Arizona: Gila and Yavapai Counties.* Verde River from Horseshoe Dam upstream to Perkinsville.

The lower segments of large streams which flow into these two sections of river may, from time to time, be inhabited by Colorado squawfish. Downstream movement of squawfish in these areas will be restricted by dams and upstream movement is limited by lack of suitable habitat.

Woundfin

(i) *Arizona: Gila and Yavapai Counties.* Verde River from backwaters of Horseshoe Reservoir upstream to Perkinsville.

(ii) *Arizona: Graham and Greenlee Counties.* Gila River from backwaters of San Carlos Reservoir upstream to Arizona/New Mexico State line.

(iii) *Arizona: Greenlee County.* San Francisco River from its junction with the Gila River upstream to the Arizona/New Mexico State line.

(iv) *Arizona: Gila County.* Tonto Creek, from Punkin Center upstream to Gisela.

(v) *Arizona: Yavapai County.* Hassayampa River, from Red Cliff upstream to Wagoner.

The movement of woundfin beyond these areas will be limited to the lower portion of larger tributaries where suitable habitat exists. Downstream movement is limited by dams, reservoirs, and dry streambed. Upstream movement from these areas is restricted due to the absence of habitat. Upstream areas are too cold and the gradient is too steep to support populations of woundfin.

(7) The reintroduced populations will be checked annually to determine their condition. A seining survey will be used to determine population expansion or contraction, reproduction success, and general health condition of the fish.

(c) Red wolf (*Canis rufus*). (1) The red wolf populations identified in paragraphs (c)(9)(i) and (c)(9)(ii) of this section are nonessential experimental populations.

(2) No person may take this species, except as provided in paragraphs (c)(3) through (5) and (10) of this section.

(3) Any person with a valid permit issued by the Service under §17.32 may take red wolves for educational purposes, scientific purposes, the enhancement of propagation or survival of the species, zoological exhibition, and other conservation purposes consistent with the Act and in accordance with applicable State fish and wildlife conservation laws and regulations;

(4)(i) Any person may take red wolves found on private land in the areas defined in paragraphs (c)(9)(i) and (ii) of this section, *Provided* that such taking is not intentional or willful, or is in defense of that person's own life or the lives of others; and that such taking is reported within 24 hours to the refuge manager (for the red wolf population defined in paragraph (c)(9)(i) of this section), the Park superintendent (for the red wolf population defined in paragraph (c)(9)(ii) of this section), or the State wildlife enforcement officer for investigation.

(ii) Any person may take red wolves found on lands owned or managed by Federal, State, or local government agencies in the areas defined in paragraphs (c)(9)(i) and (ii) of this section, *Provided* that such taking is incidental to lawful activities, is unavoidable, unintentional, and not exhibiting a lack of reasonable due care, or is in defense of that person's own life or the lives of others, and that such taking is reported within 24 hours to the refuge manager (for the red wolf population defined in paragraph (c)(9)(i) of this section), the Park superintendent (for the red wolf population defined in paragraph (c)(9)(ii) of this section), or the State wildlife enforcement officer for investigation.

(iii) Any private landowner, or any other individual having his or her permission, may take red wolves found on his or her property in the areas defined in paragraphs (c)(9)(i) and (ii) of this section when the wolves are in the act of killing livestock or pets, *Provided* that freshly wounded or killed livestock or pets are evident and that all such taking shall be reported within 24 hours to the refuge manager (for the red wolf population defined in paragraph (c)(9)(i) of this section), the Park superintendent (for the red wolf population defined in paragraph (c)(9)(ii) of this section), or the State wildlife enforcement officer for investigation.

(iv) Any private landowner, or any other individual having his or her permission, may harass red wolves found on his or her property in the areas defined in paragraphs (c)(9)(i) and (ii) of this section, *Provided* that all such harassment is by methods that are not lethal or physically injurious to the red wolf and is reported within 24 hours to the refuge manager (for the red wolf population defined in paragraph (c)(9)(i) of this section), the Park superintendent (for the red wolf population defined in paragraph (c)(9)(ii) of this section), or the State wildlife enforcement officer, as noted in paragraph (c)(6) of this section for investigation.

(v) Any private landowner may take red wolves found on his or her property in the areas defined in paragraphs (c)(9)(i) and (ii) of this section after efforts by project personnel to capture such animals have been abandoned, *Provided* that the Service project leader or biologist has approved such actions in writing and all such taking shall be reported within 24 hours to the Service project leader or biologist, the refuge manager (for the red wolf population defined in paragraph (c)(9)(i) of this section), the Park superintendent (for the red wolf population defined in paragraph (c)(9)(ii) of this section), or the State wildlife enforcement officer for investigation.

(vi) The provisions of paragraphs (4)(i) through (v) of this section apply to red wolves found in areas outside the areas defined in paragraphs (c)(9)(i)

and (ii) of this section, with the exception that reporting of taking or harassment to the refuge manager, Park superintendent, or State wildlife enforcement officer, while encouraged, is not required.

(5) Any employee or agent of the Service or State conservation agency who is designated for such purposes, when acting in the course of official duties, may take a red wolf if such action is necessary to:

(i) Aid a sick, injured, or orphaned specimen;

(ii) Dispose of a dead specimen, or salvage a dead specimen which may be useful for scientific study;

(iii) Take an animal that constitutes a demonstrable but non-immediate threat to human safety or that is responsible for depredations to lawfully present domestic animals or other personal property, if it has not been possible to otherwise eliminate such depredation or loss of personal property, *Provided* That such taking must be done in a humane manner, and may involve killing or injuring the animal only if it has not been possible to eliminate such threat by live capturing and releasing the specimen unharmed on the refuge or Park;

(iv) Move an animal for genetic purposes.

(6) Any taking pursuant to paragraphs (c) (3) through (5) of this section must be immediately reported to either the Refuge Manager, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, Manteo, North Carolina, telephone 919/473-1131, or the Superintendent, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Gatlinburg, Tennessee, telephone 615/436-1294. Either of these persons will determine disposition of any live or dead specimens.

(7) No person shall possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, ship, import, or export by any means whatsoever, any such species taken in violation of these regulations or in violation of applicable State fish and wildlife laws or regulations or the Endangered Species Act.

(8) It is unlawful for any person to attempt to commit, solicit another to commit, or cause to be committed, any offense defined in paragraphs (c) (2) through (7) of this section.

(9)(i) The Alligator River reintroduction site is within the historic range of the species in North Carolina, in Dare, Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington Counties; because of its proximity and potential conservation value, Beaufort County is also included in the experimental population designation.

(ii) The red wolf also historically occurred on lands that now comprise the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The Park encompasses properties within Haywood and Swain Counties in North Carolina, and Blount, Cocke, and Sevier Counties in Tennessee. Graham, Jackson, and Madison Counties in North Carolina, and Monroe County in Tennessee, are also included in the experimental designation because of the close proximity of these counties to the Park boundary.

(iii) Except for the three island propagation projects and these small reintroduced populations, the red wolf is extirpated from the wild. Therefore, there are no other extant populations with which the refuge or Park experimental populations could come into contact.

(10) The reintroduced populations will be monitored closely for the duration of the project, generally using radio telemetry as appropriate. All animals released or captured will be vaccinated against diseases prevalent in canids prior to release. Any animal that is determined to be in need of special care or that moves onto lands where the landowner requests their removal will be recaptured, if possible, by Service and/or Park Service and/or designated State wildlife agency personnel and will be given appropriate care. Such animals will be released back into the wild as soon as possible, unless physical or behavioral problems make it necessary to return the animals to a captive-breeding facility.

(11) The status of the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge project will be reevaluated by October 1, 1992, to determine future management status and needs. This review will take into account the reproductive success of the mated pairs, movement patterns of individual animals, food habits, and overall health of the population. The duration of the first phase of the Park project is estimated to be 10 to 12

months. After that period, an assessment of the reintroduction potential of the Park for red wolves will be made. If a second phase of reintroduction is attempted, the duration of that phase will be better defined during the assessment. However, it is presently thought that a second phase would last for 3 years, after which time the red wolf would be treated as a resident species within the Park. Throughout these periods, the experimental and non-essential designation of the animals will remain in effect.

(d) Southern sea otter (*Enhydra lutris nereis*). (1) *Definitions*. The definitions set out in §17.3 apply to this paragraph (d). For purposes of this paragraph—

(i) The term *defense-related agency action* means an agency action proposed to be carried out directly by a military department, which does not have as its intended purpose the taking of southern sea otters. For purposes of this definition, the United States Coast Guard is not a military department.

(ii) The term *management zone* means that area delineated in paragraph (d)(5)(i) of this section which surrounds the translocation zone and separates the translocation zone from the existing range of the parent population and adjacent range where expansion of the parent population is necessary for the recovery of southern sea otters.

(iii) The term *member of the experimental population of southern sea otters* includes any southern sea otter, alive or dead, found within the translocation zone or the management zone, and any part or product of any such southern sea otter.

(iv) The term *parent population* means the population of southern sea otters existing along the central California coast north of the management zone.

(v) The term *translocation zone* means the area delineated in paragraph (d)(4)(i) of this section within which an experimental population of southern sea otters is released and contained.

(vi) The term *established experimental population of southern sea otters* means a translocated population that meets the following criteria: An estimated combined minimum of 150 healthy male and female sea otters residing within the translocation zone, little or no emigration into the management zone

occurring, and a minimum annual recruitment to the experimental population in the translocation zone of 20 sea otters for at least 3 years of the latest 5-year period, or replacement yield sufficient to maintain the experimental population at or near carrying capacity during the post-establishment and growth phase or carrying capacity phase of the experimental population.

(vii) The term *stabilized population* is a population of sea otters within the translocation zone at the conclusion of the movement of animals from the parent population, except for purposes of genetic enhancement, which (A) is equal to or greater than the number of otters that were released from the holding pens alive and healthy, or 70 otters, whichever is less, and (B) is exhibiting growth. A stabilized population would represent the point at which the experimental population shifts from the transplant stage to the initial growth and reestablishment stage.

(viii) The term *carrying capacity* means the ecological state in which the numbers of sea otters within the translocation zone remain relatively constant and in balance with the available food supply.

(2) *Description of experimental population*. The experimental population of southern sea otters shall include all southern sea otters found within the translocation zone or the management zone. The Service will translocate no more than 70 southern sea otters during the first year, supplemented as necessary with up to 70 otters per year in subsequent years from the parent population to the translocation zone. Although a maximum of 250 southern sea otters may be moved from the parent population in order to establish the experimental population in the translocation zone, it is not likely that supplemental translocation after the initial 70 will involve more than small numbers of southern sea otters, although under this plan a maximum of 70 could be moved if needed in each year up to a total of 250. The majority of animals translocated each year will be weaned, immature sea otters with a sex ratio of about 4 to 1, females to males. Of the adult sea otters selected

for translocation, approximately 3 out of every 4 animals will be female.

(3) *Translocation process*—(i) *Capture*. Capture locations will be selected primarily from the southern third of the range of the parent population. Sea otters will be captured using diver-held devices, dip nets, surface entangling nets, or other methods which may be proven to be safe and effective in the future. All captured otters will be tagged and examined by a veterinarian experienced in treating marine mammals.

(ii) *Transport*. All animals to be translocated will be transported directly to the translocation zone or held in specially constructed holding facilities prior to their movement to the translocation zone. Access to and care of animals will be restricted to Federal and State personnel and designated agents directly involved with the translocation. Each captured animal will be placed in a carrying cage and transported by truck to the local airport, from which point they will be flown to the translocation zone. From there they will be trucked to the release site.

(iii) *Release*. The animals will be released directly into the wild from their transport cages, or held for up to 5 days in secured floating pens at the release site. No more than 10 individuals will be held in any pen, and adult males will be held separately. When held in floating pens the animals will be released passively by opening the floating pens and allowing animals to leave at will.

(iv) *Monitoring*. Monitoring will be conducted on both the parent population and the experimental population by State and Federal biologists and their designated agents. Monitoring the parent population will be done to determine the effects of removal of otters on the growth and range expansion or recession of the parent population. Monitoring of the parent population will continue at least through the translocation period and into the foreseeable future. Monitoring of the experimental population will begin with the first release of translocated otters and will continue at least until either

the new population reaches the carrying capacity of the habitat and establishes an equilibrium density or the translocation is determined to have failed. Monitoring will include intensive studies of changes in key components of the nearshore ecosystem of the translocation zone including benthic organisms, kelp and finfish. Monitoring, using ground and aerial observations, will also include intensive observation and documentation of the movements, distribution, foraging and reproductive behavior, dispersal tendencies, growth and reproductive rates, prey selection, and social interactions of sea otters in the experimental population. Results of monitoring the experimental population and the parent population will also be compared and evaluated.

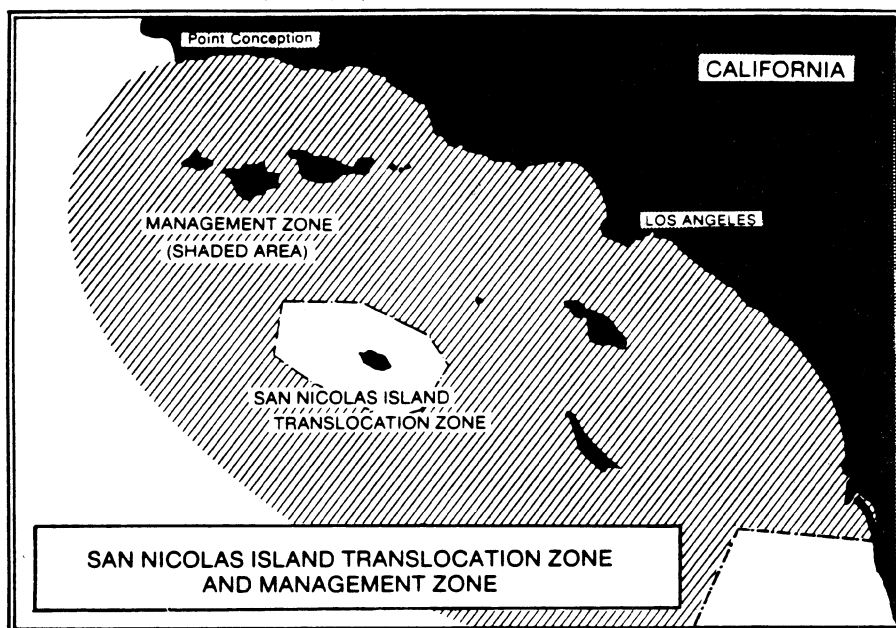
(v) *Protection*. At least two law enforcement officers will be specifically assigned, at least for the initial three-to five-year period after the actual translocation of animals, to conduct patrols and prevent illegal taking of southern sea otters in the translocation zone. Cooperative enforcement arrangements will be developed with other agencies having law enforcement activities in the area such as the U.S. Coast Guard, National Marine Fisheries Service, California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Navy, and National Park Service to assist with protecting the experimental population.

(4) *Translocation zone*. (i) There is established a translocation zone for southern sea otters comprised of San Nicolas Island, Begg Rock, and the surrounding waters within the following coordinates:

N. LATITUDE/W. LONGITUDE

33°27.8'/119°34.3'
33°20.5'/119°15.5'
33°13.5'/119°11.8'
33°06.5'/119°15.3'
33°02.8'/119°26.8'
33°08.8'/119°46.3'
33°17.2'/119°56.9'
33°30.9'/119°54.2'

(ii) A map depicting the translocation zone is set forth below:



**Translocation Zone Coordinates:
(North Latitude/West Longitude)**

33°27.8'/119°34.3', 33°20.5'/119°15.5'
 33°13.5'/119°11.8', 33°06.5'/119°15.3'
 33°02.8'/119°26.8', 33°08.8'/119°46.3'
 33°17.2'/119°56.9', 33°30.9'/119°54.2'

Management Zone:

All U.S. areas south of Point Conception
 (34°26.9' N. Latitude)
 except the translocation zone.

(iii) *Prohibitions.* Except as provided in paragraph (d)(4)(iv), all of the provisions in §17.21 (a) through (f) shall apply to any member of the experimental population of southern sea otters within the translocation zone.

(iv) *Exceptions.* The prohibitions of paragraph (d)(4)(iii) shall not apply to:

(A) Any act by the Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, or an authorized agent of the Service or the California Department of Fish and Game that is necessary to effect the relocation or management of any southern sea otter under the provisions of this paragraph;

(B) Any taking of a member of the experimental population of southern sea otters that is incidental to, and not

the purpose of, the carrying out of a defense-related agency action as defined in paragraph (d)(1)(i) of this section; or

(C) Any act authorized by a permit issued under §17.32.

(5) *Management zone.* (i) There is established a management zone for southern sea otters comprised of all waters, islands, islets, and land areas seaward of mean high tide subject to the jurisdiction of the United States located south of Point Conception, California (34°26.9' N. Latitude), except for any area within the translocation zone delineated in paragraph (d)(4)(i) of this section.

(ii) A map depicting the management zone is set forth in paragraph (d)(4)(ii) of this section.

(iii) *Prohibitions.* Except as provided in paragraph (d)(5)(iv), all of the provisions in §17.21 (a) through (f) shall apply to any member of the experimental population of southern sea otters within the management zone.

(iv) *Exceptions.* The prohibitions of paragraph (d)(5)(iii) shall not apply to:

(A) Any act by the Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, or an authorized agent of the Service or the California Department of Fish and Game that is necessary to effect the relocation or management of any southern sea otter under the provisions of this paragraph;

(B) Any taking of a member of the experimental population of southern sea otters that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity within the management zone delineated in paragraph (d)(5)(i) of this section; or

(C) Any act authorized by a permit issued under §17.32.

(6) *Containment.* The following containment measures, listed in order of preference, will be employed to prevent significant emigration of southern sea otters from San Nicolas Island and occupation of habitat within the management zone:

(i) Capture of animals within the management zone for return to the experimental population or to the range of the parent population using non-lethal means. If verified sightings of one or more sea otters are made at any location within the management zone, field crews will be mobilized as soon as weather and sea conditions permit, to capture and remove the otter(s) from the zone. Capture will be done by experienced State and/or Federal personnel or other designated agents, using one or more of the same techniques used in the translocation effort, such as diver-held devices; surface entangling nets; dip nets; or other effective methods which may be developed for capturing sea otters in the future. Animals either will be flown or moved by air-conditioned van to the release site.

(ii) Artificial reduction of fecundity for some sea otters within the experimental population. [Reserved]

(iii) Selective or random, non-lethal removal of members of the experimental population within the translocation zone. [Reserved]

Containment measures will be administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Sea Otter Management and Coordination (OSOMC), in consultation and cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Game. The OSOMC will work closely with State biologists to remove otters from the management zone. Federal funding received through the normal appropriations process will be used for research, protection, and containment of the experimental population. Grants to the State of California under 16 U.S.C. 1535, may be employed to facilitate the measures outlined above. Public donations for management and containment of the experimental population will be accepted with assistance from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

(7) *Effects of translocation on recovery and interagency cooperation—(i) Background.* The Recovery Plan specifically describes the importance of translocation to the delisting of the southern sea otter under the Endangered Species Act. The Plan states:

Sea otter translocation, if properly designed and implemented, should provide the necessary foundation for ultimately obtaining the Recovery Plan's objective and restoring the southern sea otter to a non-threatened status and maintaining OSP by: (i) Establishing a second colony (or colonies) sufficiently distant from the present population such that a smaller portion of southern sea otters will be jeopardized in the event of a large-scale oil spill, and (ii) establishing a data base for identifying the optimal sustainable population level for the sea otter.

Thus the translocation, and establishment of a population of sea otters has been identified by the Recovery Plan as a critical action necessary for the recovery and delisting of the species. With regard to the relationship of a successful translocation to the initiation of a delisting action under the Endangered Species Act. The Plan states:

Delisting should be considered when the southern sea otter population is stable or increasing at sustainable rates in a large enough area of their original habitat that only a small proportion of the population

would be decimated by any single natural or man-caused catastrophe. To reach this point: (1) At least one additional population of sea otters must be established outside the current population range, (2) the existing population of sea otters and its habitat must be protected, and (3) the threat from oil spills or other major environmental changes must be minimized.

The successful establishment of the experimental population to be carried out pursuant to this rule should fully satisfy the first criterion specified above from the Recovery Plan, provided that the parent population is showing sustained growth and expanding its range from its present size and distribution. However, if such growth and expansion is not occurring, the establishment of a single new population may not be sufficient to satisfy the broader criterion that the population must be increasing at a sustainable rate in a large enough area of their original habitat that only a small proportion of the population would be decimated by any single natural or man-caused catastrophe.

(ii) *Effect on recovery.* The translocation will not influence the legal status of the species until such time as the Service determines that the experimental population is established. Once established, other factors such as the status of the parent population and completion of other recovery tasks will be considered. If the experimental population becomes established and the other recovery tasks identified in the recovery plan for the southern sea otter are attained, the southern sea otter will be eligible for consideration for delisting in accordance with the requirements of 50 CFR 424.11(d). If a catastrophic event were to significantly diminish the parent population, the size of the experimental population would be a factor in determining whether or not the southern sea otter should remain listed as “threatened” or reclassified as “endangered,” or if relisting should be considered if a delisting action had been completed.

(iii) *Effect on interagency cooperation.* In determining the likelihood of jeopardy or non-jeopardy opinions for proposed Federal actions that “may affect” southern sea otters, the probability of jeopardy determinations will decrease proportionally for comparable

projects with comparable types of impacts as the experimental population grows from the point of being established toward the maximum number that its habitat can support, i.e., carrying capacity. Thus, there is an inverse relationship between the size of the experimental population (after being determined to be established) and the probability of jeopardy determinations associated with section 7 consultations under the Endangered Species Act for projects affecting either the parent or the experimental population. However, the status of the experimental population is not the only factor to be considered in section 7 evaluations. The status of the parent population, as well as the cumulative impacts, baseline level of threats, and effects of the action on either population, will also be taken into account. In addition to considering the size of the experimental population, the contribution that such population could make toward helping restore a damaged parent population will also be a factor that will be considered during section 7 evaluations. For section 7 purposes, once the translocated otters become stabilized and enter into the initial growth and reestablishment stage, but before meeting the criteria for an established population, the experimental population will have an existence value that will be taken into consideration both quantitatively and qualitatively. Its numbers will be added to those of the parent population for purposes of analyzing the impacts of a Federal action on the southern sea otter population. Moreover, during the initial growth and reestablishment stage, as part of the analysis of the impacts on the population as a whole, the impacts of proposed Federal actions will be analyzed to clearly determine the relative risk to each of the two populations (parent population and the experimental population).

(8) *Determination of a failed translocation.* The translocation would generally be considered to have failed if one or more of the following conditions exists:

(i) If, after the first year following initiation of translocation or any subsequent year, no translocated otters remain within the translocation zone and

the reasons for emigration or mortality cannot be identified and/or remedied;

(ii) If, within three years from the initial transplant, fewer than 25 otters remain in the translocation zone and the reason for emigration or mortality cannot be identified and/or remedied;

(iii) If, after two years following the completion of the transplant phase, the experimental population is declining at a significant rate and the translocated otters are not showing signs of successful reproduction (i.e., no pupping is observed); however, termination of the project under this and the previous criterion may be delayed if reproduction is occurring and the degree of dispersal into the management zone is small enough that the efforts to continue to remove otters from the management zone are acceptable to the Service and California Department of Fish and Game;

(iv) If the Service determines, in consultation with the affected State and Marine Mammal Commission, that otters are dispersing from the translocation zone and becoming established within the management zone in sufficient numbers to demonstrate that containment cannot be successfully accomplished. This standard is not intended to apply to situations in which individuals or small numbers of otters are sighted within the management zone or temporarily manage to elude capture. Instead, it is meant to be applied when it becomes apparent that, over time, otters are relocating from the translocation zone to the management zone in such numbers that: (A) An independent breeding colony is likely to become established within the management zone, or (B) they could cause economic damage to fishery resources within the management zone. It is expected that the Service could make this determination within a year provided sufficient information is available;

(v) If the health and well-being of the experimental population should become threatened to the point that the colony's continued survival is unlikely, despite the protections given to it by the Service, State, and applicable laws and regulations. An example would be if an overriding military action for na-

tional security was proposed that would threaten to devastate the colony and removal of the otters was determined to be the only viable way of preventing the loss of the individuals.

(vi) If, based on any one of these criteria, the Service concludes, after consultation with the affected State and Marine Mammal Commission, that the translocation has failed to produce a viable, contained experimental population, this rulemaking will be amended to terminate the experimental population, and all otters remaining within the translocation zone will be captured and all healthy otters will be placed back into the range of the parent population. Efforts to maintain the management zone free of otters will be curtailed after all reasonable efforts have been made to remove all otters that are still within the management zone at the time of the decision to terminate the translocated population. A joint State-Service consultation will determine when all reasonable efforts have been made and additional efforts would be futile.

(vii) Prior to declaring the translocation a failure, a full evaluation will be conducted into the probable causes of the failure. If the causes could be determined, and legal and reasonable remedial measures identified and implemented, consideration will be given to continuing to maintain the translocated population. If such reasonable measures cannot be identified and implemented, the results of the evaluation will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER with a proposed rulemaking to terminate the experimental population.

(e) Yellowfin madtom (*Noturus flavipinnis*). (1) The yellowfin madtom population identified in paragraph (4) of this subsection is a nonessential experimental population.

(2) All prohibitions and exceptions listed in §§17.31 and 17.32 apply to the population identified in paragraph (e)(4) of this section, except that it may also be incidentally taken in accordance with applicable State laws and regulations.

(3) Any violation of State law regulating the take of this species from the population identified in paragraph

(e)(4) of this section will also be a violation of the Endangered Species Act.

(4) This experimental population of the yellowfin madtom is found in the North Fork Holston River watershed, Washington, Smyth and Scott Counties, Virginia; South Fork Holston River watershed upstream to Ft. Patrick Henry Dam, Sullivan County, Tennessee; and the Holston River from the confluence of the North and South Forks downstream to the John Sevier Detention Lake Dam, Hawkins County, Tennessee. The reintroduction site is within the historic range of this species but it is totally isolated from existing populations of this species by large Tennessee River tributaries and reservoirs. As the species is not known to inhabit reservoirs, and it is unlikely that they could move 100 river miles through these large reservoirs, the possibility of this population contacting extant wild populations is unlikely.

(f) Guam Rail (*Rallus owstoni*). (1) The Guam rail population identified in paragraph (f)(7) of this section is a non-essential experimental population.

(2) No person shall take this species, except:

(i) In accordance with a valid permit issued by the Service under §17.32 for educational purposes, scientific purposes, the enhancement of propagation or survival of the species, zoological exhibition, and other conservation purposes consistent with the Act; or

(ii) As authorized by the laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, after the Service has made the determination that the experimental population has become well established and occupies all suitable habitat island-wide.

(3) Any employee of the Service, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife, or the Guam Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources who is designated for such purposes, may, when acting in the course of official duties, take a Guam rail without a permit if such action is necessary to:

(i) Aid a sick, injured, or orphaned specimen;

(ii) Dispose of a dead specimen;

(iii) Salvage a dead specimen that may be useful for scientific study; or

(iv) Take an animal that is responsible for depredations to personal property if it has not been possible to otherwise eliminate such depredations and/or loss of personal property, provided that such taking must be done in a humane manner and may involve injuring or killing the bird only if it has not been possible to eliminate depredations by live capturing and releasing the specimen unharmed in other suitable habitats.

(4) Any violation of applicable commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands fish and wildlife conservation laws or regulations with respect to the taking of this species (other than taking as described in paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section) will also be a violation of the Endangered Species Act.

(5) No person shall possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, ship, import, or export by any means whatsoever, any such species taken in violation of these regulations or in violation of applicable Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands fish and wildlife laws or regulations or the Endangered Species Act.

(6) It is unlawful for any person to attempt to commit, solicit another to commit, or cause to be committed, any offense defined in paragraphs (f) (2) through (5) of this section.

(7) The sites for introduction of Guam rails on Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, are on an island separated from Guam by 50 kilometers of ocean. The last known observation of an individual of this species occurred near the northern tip of Guam, which is closest to the island of Rota. No intermingling of these populations will occur since this species has been extirpated in the wild on Guam. The Rota release sites are of necessity outside the historic range of the Guam rail, as described in this regulation, because its primary range has been unsuitably and irreversibly destroyed by the brown tree snake.

(8) The nonessential experimental population on Rota will be checked periodically by staff of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife and cooperating staff from the University of

Tennessee to determine dispersal patterns, mortality, and reproductive success. The overall success of the releases and general health of the population will also be assessed.

(g) Black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*). (1) The black-footed ferret populations identified in paragraph (g)(9)(i), (g)(9)(ii), and (g)(9)(iii), and (g)(9)(iv) of this section are non-essential experimental populations. We will manage each of these populations will be managed in accordance with their respective management plans.

(2) No person may take this species in the wild in the experimental population area, except as provided in paragraphs (g)(3), (4), (5), and (10) of this section.

(3) Any person with a valid permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 17.32 may take black-footed ferrets in the wild in the experimental population areas.

(4) Any employee or agent of the Service or appropriate State wildlife agency designated for such purposes, acting in the course of official duties, may take a black-footed ferret in the wild in the experimental population areas if such action is necessary:

- (i) For scientific purposes;
- (ii) To relocate a ferret to avoid conflict with human activities;
- (iii) To relocate a ferret that has moved outside the Little Snake Black-footed Ferret Management Area/Coyote Basin Primary Management Zone when removal is necessary to protect the ferret, or is requested by an affected landowner or land manager, or whose removal is requested pursuant to paragraph (g)(12) of this section;
- (iv) To relocate ferrets within the experimental population area to improve ferret survival and recovery prospects;
- (v) To relocate ferrets from the experimental population areas into other ferret reintroduction areas or captivity;
- (vi) To aid a sick, injured, or orphaned animal; or
- (vii) To salvage a dead specimen for scientific purposes.

(5) A person may take a ferret in the wild within the experimental population areas, provided such take is incidental to and not the purpose of, the

carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity and if such ferret injury or mortality was unavoidable, unintentional, and did not result from negligent conduct. Such conduct is not considered intentional or "knowing take" for the purposes of this regulation, and the Service will not take legal action for such conduct. However, we will refer cases of knowing take to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

(6) You must report any taking pursuant to paragraphs (g)(3), (4)(vi) and (vii), and (5) of this section to the appropriate Service Field Supervisor, who will determine the disposition of any live or dead specimens.

(i) Report such taking in the Shirley Basin/Medicine Bow experimental population area to the Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, Fish and Wildlife Service, Cheyenne, Wyoming (telephone: 307/772-2374).

(ii) Report such taking in the Conata Basin/Badlands experimental population area to the Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, Fish and Wildlife Service, Pierre, South Dakota (telephone: 605/224-8693).

(iii) Report such taking in the northcentral Montana experimental population area to the Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, Fish and Wildlife Service, Helena, Montana (telephone: 406/449-5225).

(iv) Report such taking in the Aubrey Valley experimental population area to the Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, Fish and Wildlife Service, Phoenix, Arizona (telephone: 602/640-2720).

(v) Report such taking in the northwestern Colorado/northeastern Utah experimental population area to the appropriate Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lakewood, Colorado (telephone: 303/275-2370), or Salt Lake City, Utah (telephone: 801/524-5001).

(7) No person shall possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, ship, import, or export by any means whatsoever, any ferret or part thereof from the experimental populations taken in violation of these regulations or in violation of applicable State fish and wildlife laws or regulations or the Endangered Species Act.

(8) It is unlawful for any person to attempt to commit, solicit another to

commit, or cause to commit, any offense defined in paragraphs (g)(2) and (7) of this section.

(9) The sites for reintroduction of black-footed ferrets are within the historical range of the species.

(i) We consider the Shirley Basin/Medicine Bow Management Area on the attached map of Wyoming to be the core recovery area for this species in southeastern Wyoming. The boundaries of the nonessential experimental population are that part of Wyoming south and east of the North Platte River within Natrona, Carbon, and Albany Counties (see Wyoming map). All marked ferrets found in the wild within these boundaries prior to the first breeding season following the first year of releases constituted the nonessential experimental population during this period. All ferrets found in the wild within these boundaries during and after the first breeding season following the first year of releases comprise the nonessential experimental population, thereafter.

(ii) We consider the Conata Basin/Badlands Reintroduction Area on the attached map for South Dakota to be the core recovery area for this species in southwestern South Dakota. The boundaries of the nonessential experimental population area occur north of State Highway 44 and BIA Highway 2 east of the Cheyenne River and BIA Highway 41, south of I-90, and west of State Highway 73 within Pennington, Shannon, and Jackson Counties, South Dakota. Any black-footed ferret found in the wild within these boundaries is part of the nonessential experimental population after the first breeding season following the first year of releases of black-footed ferret in the Reintroduction Area. A black-footed ferret occurring outside the experimental population area in South Dakota is considered as endangered but may be captured for genetic testing. We will dispose of the captured animal in one of the following ways if necessary:

(A) We may return an animal genetically related to the experimental population to the Reintroduction Area or to a captive facility.

(B) Under an existing contingency plan, we will use up to nine black-footed ferrets genetically unrelated to the

experimental population in the captive-breeding program. If a landowner outside the experimental population area wishes to retain black-footed ferrets on his property, we will develop a conservation agreement or easement with the landowner.

(iii) We consider the Northcentral Montana Reintroduction Area shown on the attached map for Montana to be the core recovery area for this species in northcentral Montana. The boundaries of the nonessential experimental population are those parts of Phillips and Blaine Counties, Montana, described as the area bounded on the north beginning at the northwest corner of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation on the Milk River; east following the Milk River to the east Phillips County line; then south along said line to the Missouri River; then west along the Missouri River to the west boundary of Phillips County; then north along said county line to the west boundary of Fort Belknap Indian Reservation; then further north along said boundary to the point of origin at the Milk River. All marked ferrets found in the wild within these boundaries prior to the first breeding season following the first year of releases constituted the nonessential experimental population during this period. All ferrets found in the wild within these boundaries during and after the first breeding season following the first year of releases comprise the nonessential experimental population thereafter. A black-footed ferret occurring outside the experimental area in Montana is initially considered as endangered but may be captured for genetic testing. We will dispose of the captured animal in one of the following ways if necessary:

(A) We may return an animal genetically related to the experimental population to the reintroduction area or to a captive facility.

(B) Under an existing contingency plan, we will use up to nine black-footed ferrets genetically unrelated to the experimental population in the captive-breeding program. If a landowner outside the experimental population area wishes to retain black-footed ferrets on his property, we will develop a

conservation agreement or easement with the landowner.

(iv) We consider the Aubrey Valley Experimental Population Area shown on the attached map for Arizona to be the core recovery area for this species in northwestern Arizona. The boundary of the nonessential experimental population area is those parts of Coconino, Mohave, and Yavapai Counties that include the Aubrey Valley west of the Aubrey Cliffs, starting from Chino Point, north along the crest of the Aubrey cliffs to the Supai Road (State Route 18), southwest along the Supai Road to Township 26 North, then west to Range 11 West, then south to the Hualapai Indian Reservation boundary, then east and northeast along the Hualapai Indian Reservation boundary to U.S. Highway Route 66; then southeast along Route 66 for approximately 6 km (2.3 miles) to a point intercepting the east boundary of section 27, Township 25 North, Range 9 West; then south along a line to where the Atchison-Topeka Railroad enters Yampa Divide Canyon; then southeast along the Atchison-Topeka Railroad alignment to the intersection of the Range 9 West/Range 8 West boundary; then south to the SE corner of section 12, Township 24 North, Range 9 West; then southeast to SE corner section 20, Township 24 West, Range 8 West; then south to the SE corner section 29, Township 24 North, Range 8 West; then southeast to the half section point on the east boundary line of section 33, Township 24 North, Range 8 West; then northeast to the SE corner of section 27, Township 24 North, Range 8 West; then southeast to the SE corner Section 35, Township 24 North, Range 8 West; then southeast to the half section point on the east boundary line of section 12, Township 23 North, Range 8 West; then southeast to the SE corner of section 8, Township 23 North, Range 7 West; then southeast to the SE corner of section 16, Township 23 North, Range 7 West; then east to the half section point of the north boundary line of section 14, Township 23 North, Range 7 West; then south to the half section point on the north boundary line of section 26, Township 23 North, Range 7 West; then east along section line to route 66; then southeast along route 66 to the point of

origin at Chino Point. Any black-footed ferrets found in the wild within these boundaries is part of the non-essential experimental population after the first breeding season following the first year of releases of ferrets into the reintroduction area. A black-footed ferret occurring outside the experimental area in Arizona is initially considered as endangered but may be captured for genetic testing. We will dispose of the captured animal in one of the following ways if necessary:

(A) We may return an animal genetically related to the experimental population to the reintroduction area or to a captive facility. If a landowner outside the experimental population area wishes to retain black-footed ferrets on his property, we will develop a conservation agreement or easement with the landowner.

(B) Under an existing contingency plan, we will use up to nine black-footed ferrets genetically unrelated to the experimental population in the captive-breeding program. If a landowner outside the experimental population area wishes to retain black-footed ferrets on his property, we will develop a conservation agreement or easement with the landowner.

(v) We consider the Little Snake Black-footed Ferret Management Area in Colorado and the Coyote Basin Black-footed Ferret Primary Management Zone in Utah as the initial recovery sites for this species within the Northwestern Colorado/Northeastern Utah Experimental Population Area (see Colorado/Utah map). The boundaries of the nonessential Experimental Population Area will be all of Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties in Colorado west of Colorado State Highway 13; all of Uintah and Duchesne Counties in Utah; and in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, the line between Range 96 and 97 West (eastern edge), Range 102 and 103 West (western edge), and Township 14 and 15 North (northern edge). All marked ferrets found in the wild within these boundaries prior to the first breeding season following the first year of release will constitute the non-essential experimental population during this period. All ferrets found in the wild within these boundaries during

and after the first breeding season following the first year of releases of ferrets into the reintroduction area will comprise the nonessential experimental population thereafter. A black-footed ferret occurring outside the Experimental Population Area is initially considered as endangered but may be captured for genetic testing. We will dispose of the captured animal in one of the following ways if necessary:

(A) We may return an animal genetically related to the experimental population to the Reintroduction Area or to a captive facility.

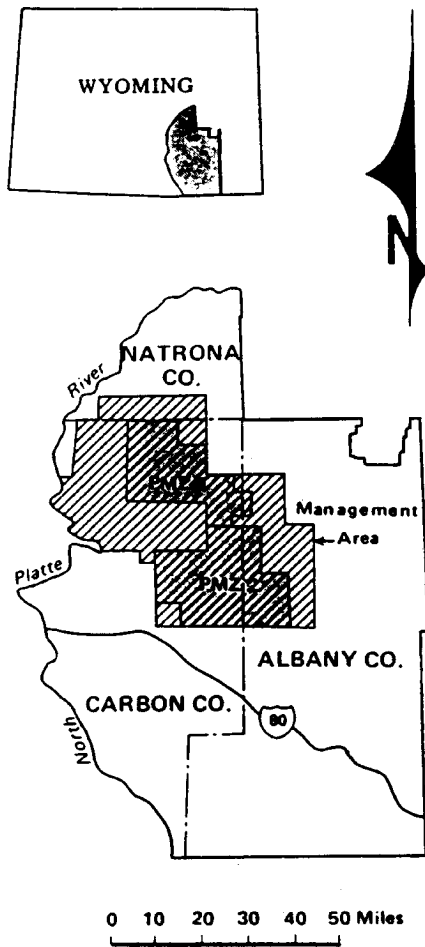
(B) Under an existing contingency plan, we will use up to nine black-footed ferrets genetically unrelated to the experimental population in the captive-breeding program. If a landowner outside the experimental population area wishes to retain black-footed ferrets on his property, we will develop a conservation agreement or easement with the landowner.

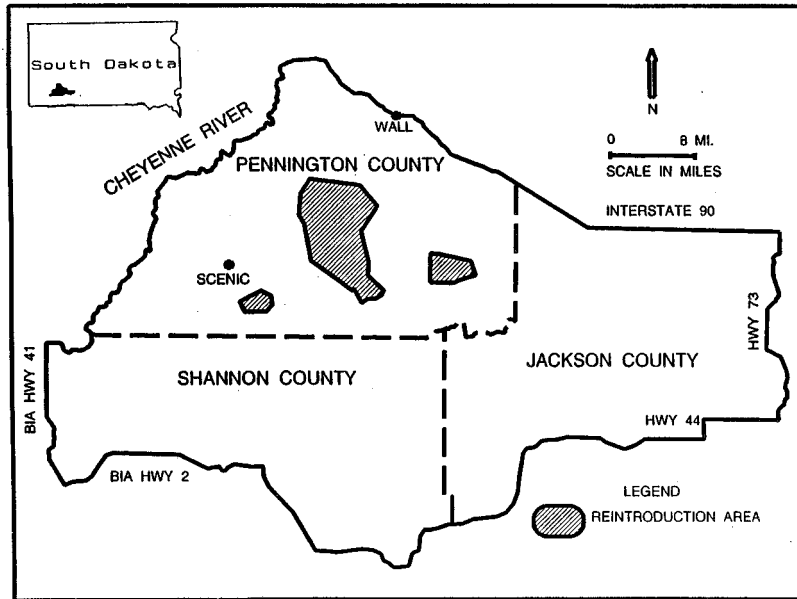
(10) Monitoring the reintroduced populations will occur continually during the life of the project, including the use of radio telemetry and other remote sensing devices, as appropriate. Vaccination of all released animals will occur prior to release, as appropriate, to prevent diseases prevalent in mustelids. Any animal that is sick, injured, or otherwise in need of special care may be captured by authorized personnel of the Service or appropriate State wildlife agency or their agents and given appropriate care. Such an animal may be released back to its ap-

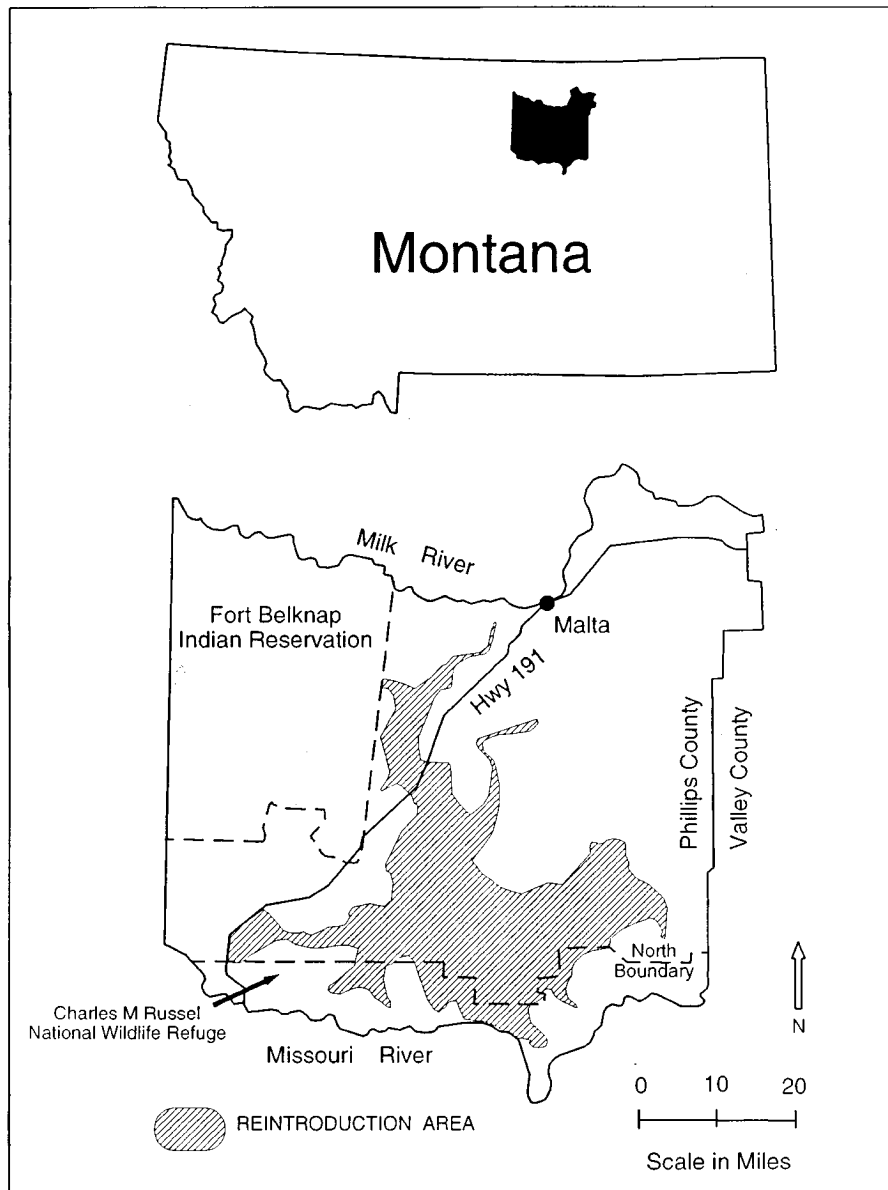
propriate reintroduction area or another authorized site as soon as possible, unless physical or behavioral problems make it necessary to return the animal to captivity.

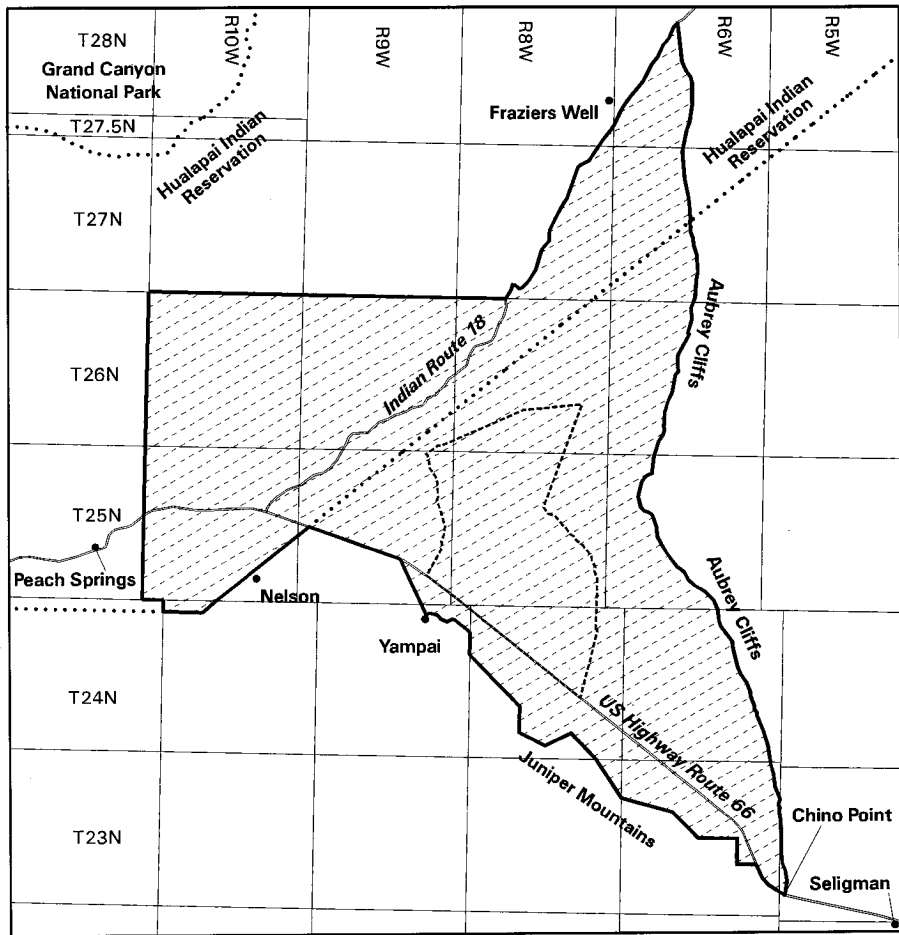
(11) We will reevaluate the status of the experimental population within the first five years after the first year of release of black-footed ferrets to determine future management needs. This review will take into account the reproductive success and movement patterns of the individuals released into the area, as well as the overall health of the experimental population and the prairie dog ecosystem in the above described areas. We will propose reclassification of the black-footed ferret when we meet the appropriate recovery objectives for the species.

(12) We will not include a reevaluation of the “nonessential experimental” designation for these populations during our review of the initial five year reintroduction program. We do not foresee any likely situation justifying alteration of the nonessential experimental status of these populations. Should any such alteration prove necessary and it results in a substantial modification to black-footed ferret management on non-Federal lands, any private landowner who consented to the introduction of black-footed ferrets on their lands may rescind their consent, and at their request, we will relocate the ferrets pursuant to paragraph (g)(4)(iii) of this section.

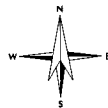








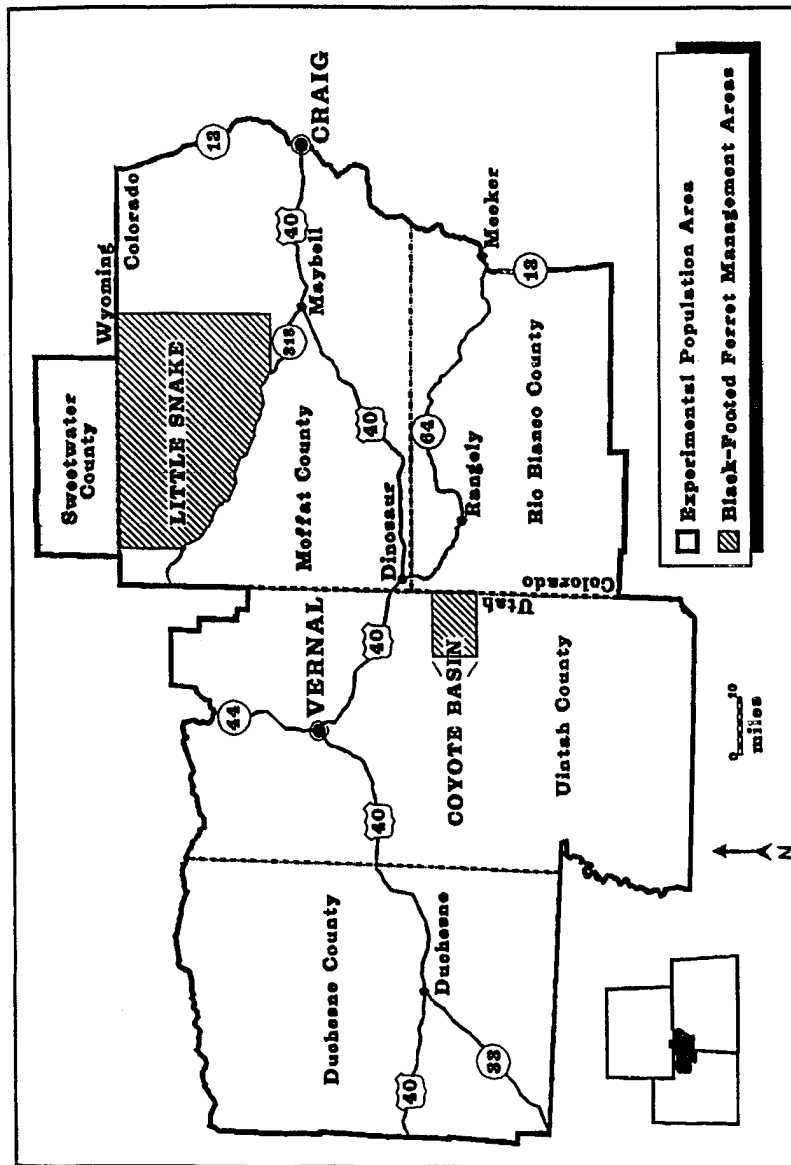


Shaded area shows location of inset map in Arizona



Miles
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-  Black-footed ferret Reintroduction Area
-  Aubrey Valley Experimental Population Area



Map Showing the Boundaries of the Black-footed Ferret Experimental Population Area and the Management Area/PMZ for Northwestern Colorado/Northeastern Utah.

- (h) Whooping crane (*Grus americana*).
 (1) The whooping crane populations identified in paragraphs (h)(8)(i) and (h)(8)(ii) of this section are non-essential experimental populations.
 (2) No person may take this species in the wild in the experimental popu-

lation area except when such take is accidental, unavoidable, and not the purpose of the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity, or as provided in paragraphs (h) (3) and (4) of this section.

(3) Any person with a valid permit issued by the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under §17.32 may take whooping cranes in the wild in the experimental population area for educational purposes, scientific purposes, the enhancement of propagation or survival of the species, and other conservation purposes consistent with the Act and in accordance with applicable State fish and wildlife conservation laws and regulations.

(4) Any employee or agent of the Service or State wildlife agency who is designated for such purposes, when acting in the course of official duties, may take a whooping crane in the wild in the experimental population area if such action is necessary to:

(i) Relocate a whooping crane to avoid conflict with human activities;

(ii) Relocate a whooping crane that has moved outside the Kissimmee Prairie or the Rocky Mountain range of the experimental population when removal is necessary or requested;

(iii) Relocate whooping cranes within the experimental population area to improve survival and recovery prospects;

(iv) Relocate whooping cranes from the experimental population area into captivity;

(v) Aid a sick, injured, or orphaned specimen; or

(vi) Dispose of a dead specimen, or salvage a dead specimen which may be useful for scientific study.

(5) Any taking pursuant to paragraphs (h) (3) and (4) of this section must be immediately reported to the National Whooping Crane Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103 (Phone: 505/766–2904), who, in conjunction with his counterpart in the Canadian Wildlife Service, will determine the disposition of any live or dead specimens.

(6) No person shall possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, ship, import, or export by any means whatsoever, any such species from the experimental population taken in violation of these regulations or in violation of applicable State fish and wildlife laws or regulations or the Endangered Species Act.

(7) It is unlawful for any person to attempt to commit, solicit another to

commit, or cause to be committed, any offense defined in paragraphs (h) (2) through (6) of this section.

(8) Geographic areas that non-essential experimental populations inhabit include the following—

(i) *The entire State of Florida.* The reintroduction site will be the Kissimmee Prairie portions of Polk, Osceola, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties. Current information indicates that the Kissimmee Prairie is within the historic range of the whooping crane in Florida. There are no other extant populations of whooping cranes that could come into contact with the experimental population. The only two extant populations occur well west of the Mississippi River. The Aransas/Wood Buffalo National Park population nests in the Northwest Territories and adjacent areas of Alberta, Canada, primarily within the boundaries of the Wood Buffalo National Park, and winters along the Central Texas Gulf of Mexico coast at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Whooping cranes adhere to ancestral breeding grounds leaving little possibility that individuals from the extant population will stray into Florida or the Rocky Mountain Population. Studies of whooping cranes have shown that migration is a learned rather than an innate behavior. The experimental population released at Kissimmee Prairie is expected to remain within the prairie region of central Florida; and

(ii) *The States of Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Utah and the western half of Wyoming.* Birds in this area do not come in contact with whooping cranes of the Aransas/Wood Buffalo Population.

(9) The reintroduced population will be closely monitored during the duration of the projects by the use of radio telemetry. Any animal which is determined to be sick, injured, or otherwise in need of special care would be immediately recaptured by Service or State wildlife personnel or their designated agent and given appropriate care. Such animals will be released back to the wild as soon as possible, unless physical or behavioral problems make it necessary to return them to a captive breeding facility.

(10) The status of the experimental population will be reevaluated periodically to determine future management needs. This review will take into account the reproductive success and movement patterns of the individuals released on the area.

(i) Gray wolf (*Canis lupus*). (1) The gray wolves (wolf) identified in paragraph (i)(7) of this section are non-essential experimental. These wolves will be managed in accordance with the respective provisions of this section.

(2) The Service finds that reintroduction of nonessential experimental gray wolves, as defined in (i)(7) of this section, will further the conservation of the species.

(3) No person may take this species in the wild in an experimental population area except as provided in paragraphs (i)(3), (7), and (8) of this section.

(i) Landowners on their private land and livestock producers (i.e., producers of cattle, sheep, horses, and mules or as defined in State and tribal wolf management plans as approved by the Service) that are legally using public land (Federal land and any other public lands designated in State and tribal wolf management plans as approved by the Service) may harass any wolf in an opportunistic (the wolf cannot be purposely attracted, tracked, waited for, or searched out, then harassed) and noninjurious (no temporary or permanent physical damage may result) manner at any time, *Provided* that such harassment is non-lethal or is not physically injurious to the gray wolf and is reported within 7 days to the Service project leader for wolf reintroduction or agency representative designated by the Service.

(ii) Any livestock producers on their private land may take (including to kill or injure) a wolf in the act of killing, wounding, or biting livestock (cattle, sheep, horses, and mules or as defined in State and tribal wolf management plans as approved by the Service), *Provided* that such incidents are to be immediately reported within 24 hours to the Service project leader for wolf reintroduction or agency representative designated by the Service, and livestock freshly (less than 24 hours) wounded (torn flesh and bleeding) or killed by wolves must be evi-

dent. Service or other Service authorized agencies will confirm if livestock were wounded or killed by wolves. The taking of any wolf without such evidence may be referred to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

(iii) Any livestock producer or permittee with livestock grazing allotments on public land may receive a written permit, valid for up to 45 days, from the Service or other agencies designated by the Service, to take (including to kill or injure) a wolf that is in the act of killing, wounding, or biting livestock (cattle, sheep, horses, and mules or as defined in State and tribal wolf management plans as approved by the Service), *Provided* that six or more breeding pairs of wolves have been documented in the experimental population area and the Service or other agencies authorized by the Service has confirmed that the livestock losses were caused by wolves and have completed agency efforts to resolve the problem. Such take must be reported immediately within 24 hours to the Service project leader for wolf reintroduction or agency representative designated by the Service. There must be evidence of freshly wounded or killed livestock by wolves. Service or other Service authorized agencies will investigate and determine if the livestock were wounded or killed by wolves. The taking of any wolf without such evidence may be referred to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

(iv) Potentially affected States and tribes may capture and translocate wolves to other areas within an experimental population area as described in paragraph (i)(7), *Provided* the level of wolf predation is negatively impacting localized ungulate populations at an unacceptable level. Such translocations cannot inhibit wolf population recovery. The States and tribes will define such unacceptable impacts, how they would be measured, and identify other possible mitigation in their State or tribal wolf management plans. These plans must be approved by the Service before such movement of wolves may be conducted.

(v) The Service, or agencies authorized by the Service, may promptly remove (place in captivity or kill) any wolf the Service or agency authorized

by the Service determines to present a threat to human life or safety.

(vi) Any person may harass or take (kill or injure) a wolf in self defense or in defense of others, *Provided* that such take is reported immediately (within 24 hours) to the Service reintroduction project leader or Service designated agent. The taking of a wolf without an immediate and direct threat to human life may be referred to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

(vii) The Service or agencies designated by the Service may take wolves that are determined to be “problem” wolves. Problem wolves are defined as wolves that in a calendar year attack livestock (cattle, sheep, horses, and mules) or as defined by State and tribal wolf management plans approved by the Service or wolves that twice in a calendar year attack domestic animals (all domestic animals other than livestock). Authorized take includes, but is not limited to non-lethal measures such as: aversive conditioning, nonlethal control, and/or translocating wolves. Such taking may be done when five or fewer breeding pairs are established in a experimental population area. If the take results in a wolf mortality, then evidence that the mortality was nondeliberate, accidental, nonnegligent, and unavoidable must be provided. When six or more breeding pairs are established in the experimental population area, lethal control of problem wolves or permanent placement in captivity will be authorized but only after other methods to resolve livestock depredations have been exhausted. Depredations occurring on Federal lands or other public lands identified in State or tribal wolf management plans and prior to six breeding pairs becoming established in an experimental population area may result in capture and release of the female wolf with pups, and her pups at or near the site of capture prior to October 1. All wolves on private land, including female wolves with pups, may be relocated or moved to other areas within the experimental population area if continued depredation occurs. Wolves attacking domestic animals other than livestock, including pets on private land, two or more times in a calendar year will be relocated. All

chronic problem wolves (wolves that depredate on domestic animals after being moved once for previous domestic animal depredations) will be removed from the wild (killed or placed in captivity). The following three criteria will be used in determining the status of problem wolves within the nonessential experimental population area:

(A) There must be evidence of wounded livestock or partial remains of a livestock carcass that clearly shows that the injury or death was caused by wolves. Such evidence is essential since wolves may feed on carrion which they found and did not kill. There must be reason to believe that additional livestock losses would occur if no control action is taken.

(B) There must be no evidence of artificial or intentional feeding of wolves. Improperly disposed of livestock carcasses in the area of depredation will be considered attractants. Livestock carrion or carcasses on public land, not being used as bait under an agency authorized control action, must be removed or otherwise disposed so that it will not attract wolves.

(C) On public lands, animal husbandry practices previously identified in existing approved allotment plans and annual operating plans for allotments must have been followed.

(viii) Any person may take a gray wolf found in an area defined in paragraph (i)(7), *Provided* that the take is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity, accidental, unavoidable, unintentional, not resulting from negligent conduct lacking reasonable due care, and due care was exercised to avoid taking a gray wolf. Such taking is to be reported within 24 hours to a Service or Service-designated authority. Take that does not conform with such provisions may be referred to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

(ix) Service or other Federal, State, or tribal personnel may receive written authorization from the Service to take animals under special circumstances. Wolves may be live captured and translocated to resolve demonstrated conflicts with ungulate populations or with other species listed under the Act, or when they are found outside of the designated experimental population

area. Take procedures in such instances would involve live capture and release to a remote area or placement in a captive facility, if the animal is clearly unfit to remain in the wild. Killing of wolves will be a last resort and is only authorized when live capture attempts have failed or there is clear endangerment to human life.

(x) Any person with a valid permit issued by the Service under §17.32 may take wolves in the wild in the experimental population area, pursuant to terms of the permit.

(xi) Any employee or agent of the Service or appropriate Federal, State, or tribal agency, who is designated in writing for such purposes by the Service, when acting in the course of official duties, may take a wolf from the wild within the experimental population area, if such action is for:

(A) Scientific purposes;

(B) To relocate wolves to avoid conflict with human activities;

(C) To relocate wolves within the experimental population areas to improve wolf survival and recovery prospects;

(D) To relocate wolves that have moved outside the experimental population area back into the experimental population area;

(E) To aid or euthanize sick, injured, or orphaned wolves;

(F) To salvage a dead specimen which may be used for scientific study; or

(G) To aid in law enforcement investigations involving wolves.

(xii) Any taking pursuant to this section must be reported immediately (within 24 hours) to the appropriate Service or Service-designated agency, which will determine the disposition of any live or dead specimens.

(4) Human access to areas with facilities where wolves are confined may be restricted at the discretion of Federal, State, and tribal land management agencies. When five or fewer breeding pairs are in an experimental population area, land-use restrictions may also be employed on an as-needed basis, at the discretion of Federal land management and natural resources agencies to control intrusive human disturbance

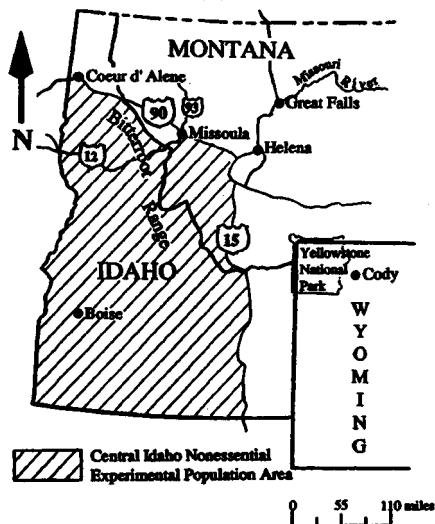
around active wolf den sites. Such temporary restrictions on human access, when five or fewer breeding pairs are established in an experimental population area, may be required between April 1 and June 30, within 1 mile of active wolf den or rendezvous sites and would only apply to public lands or other such lands designated in State and tribal wolf management plans. When six or more breeding pairs are established in an experimental population area, no land-use restrictions may be employed outside of national parks or national wildlife refuges, unless wolf populations fail to maintain positive growth rates toward population recovery levels for 2 consecutive years. If such a situation arose, State and tribal agencies would identify, recommend, and implement corrective management actions within 1 year, possibly including appropriate land-use restrictions to promote growth of the wolf population.

(5) No person shall possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, ship, import, or export by any means whatsoever, any wolf or part thereof from the experimental populations taken in violation of the regulations in paragraph (i) of this section or in violation of applicable State or tribal fish and wildlife laws or regulations or the Endangered Species Act.

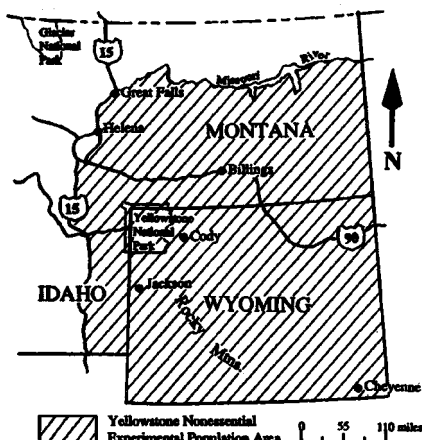
(6) It is unlawful for any person to attempt to commit, solicit another to commit, or cause to be committed any offense defined in this section.

(7) The site for reintroduction is within the historic range of the species:

(i) The central Idaho area is shown on the following map. The boundaries of the nonessential experimental population area will be those portions of Idaho that are south of Interstate Highway 90 and west of Interstate 15, and those portions of Montana south of Interstate 90, Highway 93 and 12 from Missoula, Montana west of Interstate 15.



(ii) The Yellowstone Management Area is shown on the following map. The boundaries of the nonessential experimental population area will be that portion of Idaho that is east of Interstate Highway 15; that portion of Montana that is east of Interstate Highway 15 and south of the Missouri River from Great Falls, Montana, to the eastern Montana border; and all of Wyoming.



(iii) All wolves found in the wild within the boundaries of this paragraph (i)(7) after the first releases will be considered nonessential experimental animals. In the conterminous United States, a wolf that is outside an

experimental area (as defined in paragraph (i)(7) of this section) would be considered as endangered (or threatened if in Minnesota) unless it is marked or otherwise known to be an experimental animal; such a wolf may be captured for examination and genetic testing by the Service or Service-designated agency. Disposition of the captured animal may take any of the following courses:

(A) If the animal was not involved in conflicts with humans and is determined likely to be an experimental wolf, it will be returned to the reintroduction area.

(B) If the animal is determined likely to be an experimental wolf and was involved in conflicts with humans as identified in the management plan for the closest experimental area, it may be relocated, placed in captivity, or killed.

(C) If the animal is determined not likely to be an experimental animal, it will be managed according to any Service approved plans for that area or will be marked and released near its point of capture.

(D) If the animal is determined not to be a wild gray wolf or if the Service or agencies designated by the Service determine the animal shows physical or behavioral evidence of hybridization with other canids, such as domestic dogs or coyotes, or of being an animal raised in captivity, it will be returned to captivity or killed.

(8) The reintroduced wolves will be monitored during the life of the project, including by the use of radio telemetry and other remote sensing devices as appropriate. All released animals will be vaccinated against diseases and parasites prevalent in canids, as appropriate, prior to release and during subsequent handling. Any animal that is sick, injured, or otherwise in need of special care may be captured by authorized personnel of the Service or Service-designated agencies and given appropriate care. Such an animal will be released back into its respective reintroduction area as soon as possible, unless physical or behavioral problems make it necessary to return the animal to captivity or euthanize it.

(9) The status of the experimental population will be reevaluated within

the first 3 years, after the first year of releases of wolves, to determine future management needs and if further reintroductions are required. This review will take into account the reproductive success and movement patterns of the individuals released in the area, as well as the overall health and fate of the experimental wolves. Once recovery goals are met for downlisting or delisting the species, a rule will be proposed to address downlisting or delisting.

(10) The Service does not intend to reevaluate the “nonessential experimental” designation. The Service does not foresee any likely situation which would result in changing the nonessential experimental status until the gray wolf is recovered and delisted in the northern Rocky Mountains according to provisions outlined in the Act. However, if the wolf population does not demonstrate positive growth toward recovery goals for 2 consecutive years, the affected States and tribes, in cooperation with the Service, would, within 1 year, identify and initiate wolf management strategies, including appropriate public review and comment, to ensure continued wolf population growth toward recovery levels. All reintroduced wolves designated as nonessential experimental will be removed from the wild and the experimental population status and regulations revoked when (i) legal actions or lawsuits change the wolves status to endangered under the Act or (ii) within 90 days of the initial release date, naturally occurring wolves, consisting of two breeding pairs that for 2 consecutive years have each successfully raised two offspring, are discovered in the experimental population area. The naturally occurring wolves would be managed and protected as endangered species under the Act.

(j) California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*). (1) The California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) population identified in paragraph (j)(8) of this section is a nonessential experimental population, and the release of such population will further the conservation of the species.

(2) You must not take any California condor in the wild in the experimental population area except as provided by this rule:

(i) Throughout the entire California condor experimental population area, you will not be in violation of the Endangered Species Act (Act) if you unavoidably and unintentionally take (including killing or injuring) a California condor, provided such take is non-negligent and incidental to a lawful activity, such as hunting, driving, or recreational activities, and you report the take as soon as possible as provided under paragraph 5 below.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) If you have a valid permit issued by the Service under §17.32, you may take California condors in the wild in the experimental population area, pursuant to the terms of the permit.

(4) Any employee or agent of the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Bureau of Land Management or appropriate State wildlife agency, who is designated for such purposes, when acting in the course of official duties, may take a California condor from the wild in the experimental population area and vicinity if such action is necessary:

(i) For scientific purposes;

(ii) To relocate California condors within the experimental population area to improve condor survival, and to address conflicts with ongoing or proposed activities, or with private landowners, when removal is necessary to protect the condor, or is requested by an adversely affected landowner or land manager, or other adversely affected party. Adverse effects and requests for condor relocation will be documented, reported and resolved in as an expedient manner as appropriate to the specific situation to protect condors and avoid conflicts. Prior to any efforts to relocate condors, the Service will obtain permission from the appropriate landowner(s);

(iii) To relocate California condors that have moved outside the experimental population area, by returning the condor to the experimental population area or moving it to a captive breeding facility. All captures and relocations from outside the experimental population area will be coordinated with Service Cooperators, and conducted with the permission of the landowner(s) or appropriate land management agency(s).

(iv) To aid a sick, injured, or orphaned California condor;

(v) To salvage a dead specimen that may be useful for scientific study; or

(vi) To dispose of a dead specimen.

(5) Any taking pursuant to paragraphs (j)(2), (j)(4)(iv), (j)(4)(v), and (j)(4)(vi), of this section must be reported as soon as possible to the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services, Arizona Field Office, Phoenix, 2321 W. Royal Palm Road, Suite 103, Arizona (telephone 602/640-2720) who will determine the disposition of any live or dead specimens.

(6) You must not possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, ship, import, or export by any means whatsoever, any California condor or part thereof from the experimental population taken in violation of this paragraph (j) or in violation of applicable State or Tribal laws or regulations or the Act.

(7) It is unlawful for you to attempt to commit, solicit another to commit, or cause to be committed, any offense defined in paragraphs (j)(2) and (j)(6) of this section.

(8) The designated experimental population area of the California condor includes portions of three states—Arizona, Nevada, and Utah. The southern boundary is Interstate Highway 40 in Arizona from its junction with Highway 191 west across Arizona to Kingman; the western boundary starts at Kingman, goes northwest on Highway 93 to Interstate Highway 15, continues northeasterly on Interstate Highway 15 in Nevada and Utah, to Interstate Highway 70 in Utah; where the northern boundary starts and goes across Utah to Highway 191; where the eastern boundary starts and goes south through Utah until Highway 191 meets Interstate Highway 40 in Arizona (See map at end of this paragraph (j)).

(i) All California condors released into the experimental population area, and their offspring, are to be marked and visually identifiable by colored and coded patagial wing markers.

(ii) The Service has designated the experimental population area to accommodate the potential future movements of a wild population of condors. All released condors and their progeny are expected to remain in the experi-

mental area due to the geographic extent of the designation.

(9) The nonessential experimental population area includes the entire highway rights-of-way of the highways in paragraph (j)(8) of this section that constitute the perimeter boundary. All California condors found in the wild within these boundaries will comprise the experimental population.

(i) The experimental population is to be monitored during the reintroduction project. All California condors are to be given physical examinations before being released.

(ii) If there is any evidence that the condor is in poor health or diseased, it will not be released to the wild.

(iii) Any condor that displays signs of illness, is injured, or otherwise needs special care may be captured by authorized personnel of the Service, Bureau of Land Management, or appropriate State wildlife agency or their agents, and given the appropriate care. These condors are to be re-released into the reintroduction area as soon as possible, unless physical or behavioral problems make it necessary to keep them in captivity for an extended period of time, or permanently.

(10) The status of the reintroduction project is to receive an informal review on an annual basis and a formal evaluation within the first 5 years after the initial release, and every 5 years thereafter. This evaluation will include, but not be limited to: a review of management issues; compliance with agreements; assessment of available carrion; dependence of older condors on supplemental food sources; post release behavior; causes and rates of mortality; alternative release sites; project costs; public acceptance; and accomplishment of recovery tasks prescribed in California Condor Recovery Plan. The number of variables that could affect this reintroduction project make it difficult to develop criteria for success or failure after 5 years. However, if after 5 years the project is experiencing a 40 percent or greater mortality rate or released condors are not finding food on their own, serious consideration will be given to terminating the project.

(11) The Service does not intend to pursue a change in the nonessential experimental population designation to

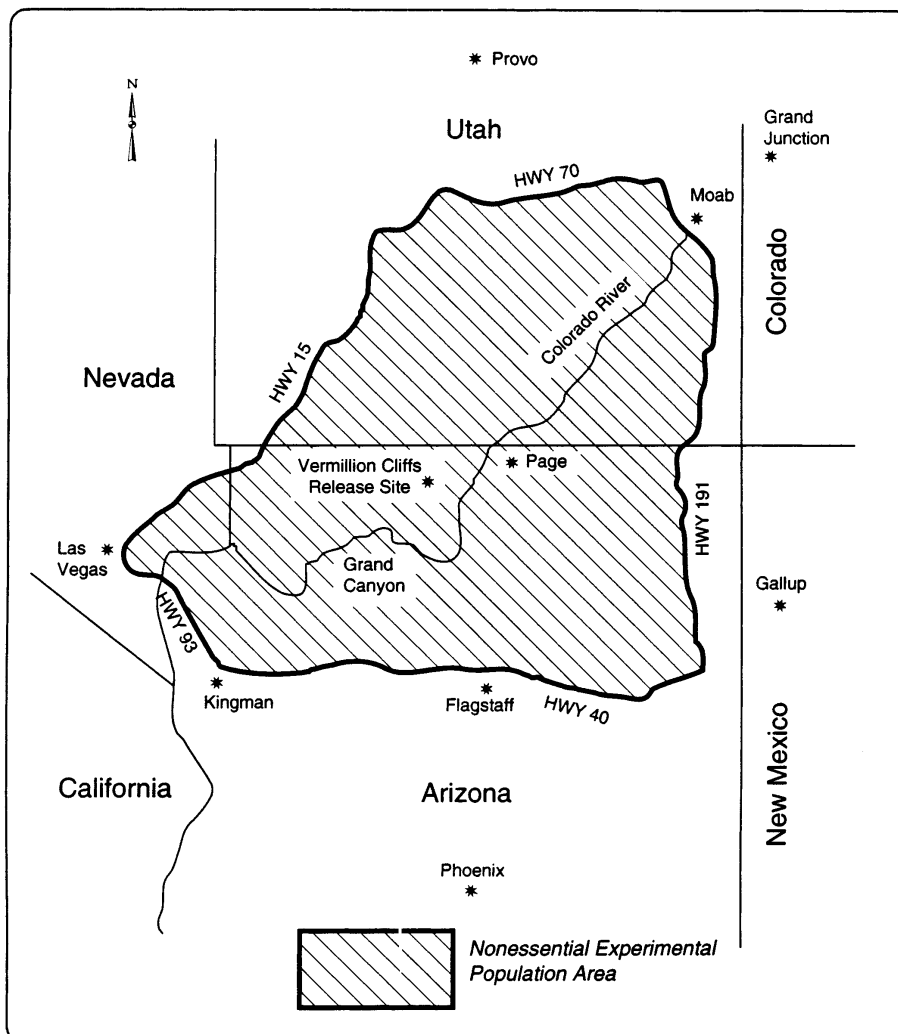
experimental essential, threatened, or endangered, or modify the experimental population area boundaries without consulting with and obtaining the full cooperation of affected parties located within the experimental population area, the reintroduction program cooperators identified in the memorandum of understanding (MOU) for this program, and the cooperators identified in the agreement for this program.

(i) The Service does not intend to change the status of this nonessential population until the California condor is recovered and delisted in accordance with the Act or if the reintroduction is not successful and the rule is revoked. No designation of critical habitat will be made for nonessential populations (16 U.S.C. § 1539(j)(2)(C)(ii)).

(ii) Legal actions or other circumstances may compel a change in this nonessential experimental population's legal status to essential, threatened, or endangered, or compel the Service to designate critical habitat for the California condors within the experimental population area defined in this rule. If this happens, all California condors will be removed from the area and this experimental population rule will be revoked, unless the parties to the MOU and agreement existing at that time agree that the birds should remain in the wild. Changes in the legal status and/or removal of this population of California condors will be made in compliance with any applicable Federal rule-making and other procedures.

CALIFORNIA CONDOR

Nonessential Experimental
Population Area And Release Site



(k) Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*). (1) The Mexican gray wolf (Mexican wolf) populations reestablished in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area and in the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area, if used, within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, identified in paragraph (k)(9) of this section, are one nonessential experimental population. This nonessential experimental population will be managed according to the following provisions.

(2) Based on the best available information, the Service finds that reintroduction of an experimental population of Mexican wolves into the subspecies' probable historic range will further the conservation of the Mexican wolf subspecies and of the gray wolf species; that the experimental population is not "essential," under 50 CFR 17.81(c)(2); that the experimental population is wholly separate geographically from any other wild gray wolf population or individual wild gray wolves; that no wild Mexican wolves are known to exist in the experimental population area or anywhere else; and that future migration of wild Mexican wolves into the experimental population area is not possible.

(3) No person, agency, or organization may "take" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] any wolf in the wild within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, except as provided in this rule. The Service may investigate each take of a Mexican wolf and may refer the take of a wolf contrary to this rule to the appropriate authorities for prosecution.

(i) Throughout the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, you will not be in violation of the Act or this rule for "unavoidable and unintentional take" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] of a wolf. Such take must be non-negligent and incidental to a legal activity, such as military training and testing, trapping, driving, or recreational activities. You must report the take within 24 hours to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or to a designated representative of the Service.

(ii) Throughout the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, you may "harass" [see definition in paragraph

(k)(15) of this section] wolves that are within 500 yards of people, buildings, facilities, pets, "livestock" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section], or other domestic animals in an opportunistic, noninjurious manner [see definition of "opportunistic, noninjurious harassment" in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] at any time—provided that wolves cannot be purposely attracted, tracked, searched out, or chased and then harassed. You must report harassment of wolves within 7 days to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or to a designated representative of the Service.

(iii) Throughout the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, excluding areas within the national park system and national wildlife refuge system, no Federal agency or their contractors will be in violation of the Act or this rule for unavoidable or unintentional take of a wolf resulting from any action authorized by that Federal agency or by the Service, including, but not limited to, military training and testing. This provision does not exempt agencies and their contractors from complying with sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(4) of the Act, the latter of which requires a conference with the Service if they propose an action that is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the Mexican wolf.

(iv) In areas within the national park system and national wildlife refuge system, Federal agencies must treat Mexican wolves as a threatened species for purposes of complying with section 7 of the Act.

(v) On private land anywhere within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, livestock owners or their agents may take (including kill or injure) any wolf actually "engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting livestock" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]; provided that evidence of livestock freshly wounded or killed by wolves is present; and further provided that the take is reported to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service within 24 hours.

(vi) On tribal reservation land anywhere within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, livestock

owners or their agents may take (including kill or injure) any wolf actually engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting livestock; provided that evidence of livestock freshly wounded or killed by wolves is present; and further provided that the take is reported to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service within 24 hours.

(vii) On "public lands" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] allotted for grazing anywhere within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, including within the designated "wolf recovery areas" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section], livestock owners or their agents may be issued a permit under the Act to take wolves actually engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting "livestock" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]. Before such a permit is issued, the following conditions must be met—livestock must be legally present on the grazing allotment; six or more "breeding pairs" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] of Mexican wolves must be present in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area; previous loss or injury of livestock on the grazing allotment, caused by wolves, must be documented by the Service or our authorized agent; and agency efforts to resolve the problem must be completed. Permits issued under this provision will be valid for 45 days or less and will specify the maximum number of wolves you are allowed to take. If you take a wolf under this provision, evidence of livestock freshly wounded or killed by wolves must be present. You must report the take to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service within 24 hours.

(viii) Throughout the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, take of Mexican wolves by livestock guarding dogs, when used in the traditional manner to protect livestock on public, tribal, and private lands, is permitted. If you become aware that such take by your guard dog has occurred, you must report the take to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service within 24 hours.

(ix) Personnel authorized by the Service may take any Mexican wolf in the nonessential experimental population in a manner consistent with a Service-approved management plan, special management measure, or a valid permit issued by the Service under §17.32. This may include, but is not limited to, capture and translocation of wolves that—prey on livestock; attack pets or domestic animals other than livestock on private or tribal land; "impact game populations in ways which may inhibit further wolf recovery" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]; prey on members of the desert bighorn sheep herd found on the White Sands Missile Range and San Andres National Wildlife Refuge so long as the State of New Mexico lists it as a species to be protected; are considered "problem wolves" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]; are a nuisance; endanger themselves by their presence in a military impact area; need aid or veterinary care; or are necessary for authorized scientific, research, or management purposes. Lethal methods of take may be used when reasonable attempts to capture wolves alive fail and when the Service determines that immediate removal of a particular wolf or wolves from the wild is necessary. Authorized personnel may use leg-hold traps and any other effective device or method for capturing or controlling wolves to carry out any measure that is a part of a Service-approved management plan, notwithstanding any conflicts in State or local law. The disposition of all wolves (live or dead) or their parts taken as part of a Service-authorized management activity must follow provisions in Service-approved management plans or interagency agreements or procedures approved by the Service on a case-by-case basis.

(x) As determined by the Service to be appropriate, the Service or any agent so authorized by the Service may capture, kill, subject to genetic testing, place in captivity, euthanize, or return to the wild (if found to be a pure Mexican wolf) any feral wolf-like animal, feral wolf hybrid, or feral dog found within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area that shows

physical or behavioral evidence of hybridization with other canids, such as domestic dogs or coyotes; being an animal raised in captivity, other than as part of a Service-approved wolf recovery program; or being socialized or habituated to humans.

(xi) The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (WS) division will discontinue use of M-44's and choking-type snares in "occupied Mexican wolf range" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]. The WS division may restrict or modify other predator control activities pursuant to a cooperative management agreement or a conference between the Service and the WS division.

(xii) You may harass or take a Mexican wolf in self defense or defense of the lives of others, provided that you report the harassment or take within 24 hours to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service. If the Service or an authorized agency determines that a wolf presents a threat to human life or safety, the Service or the authorized agency may kill it, capture and euthanize it, or place it in captivity.

(xiii) Intentional taking of any wolf in the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, except as described above, is prohibited. The Service encourages those authorized to take wolves to use nonlethal means when practicable and appropriate.

(4) You must not possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, ship, import, or export by any means whatsoever, any wolf or wolf part from the experimental population except as authorized in this rule or by a valid permit issued by the Service under §17.32. If you kill or injure a wolf or find a dead or injured wolf or wolf parts, you must not disturb them (unless instructed to do so by an authorized agent of the Service), you must minimize your disturbance of the area around them, and you must report the incident to the Service's Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator or a designated representative of the Service within 24 hours.

(5) You must not attempt to commit, solicit another to commit, or cause to

be committed, any offense defined in this rule.

(6) No land use restrictions will be imposed on private lands for Mexican wolf recovery without the concurrence of the landowner.

(7) No land use restrictions will be imposed on tribal reservation lands for Mexican wolf recovery without the concurrence of the tribal government.

(8) On public lands, the Service and cooperating agencies may temporarily restrict human access and "disturbance-causing land use activities" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section] within a 1-mile radius around release pens when wolves are in them, around active dens between March 1 and June 30, and around active wolf "rendezvous sites" [see definition in paragraph 17.84(k)(15) of this section] between June 1 and September 30, as necessary.

(9) The two designated wolf recovery areas and the experimental population area for Mexican wolves classified as a nonessential experimental population by this rule are described in the following subsections. Both designated wolf recovery areas are within the subspecies' probable historic range and are wholly separate geographically from the current range of any known Mexican wolves or other gray wolves..

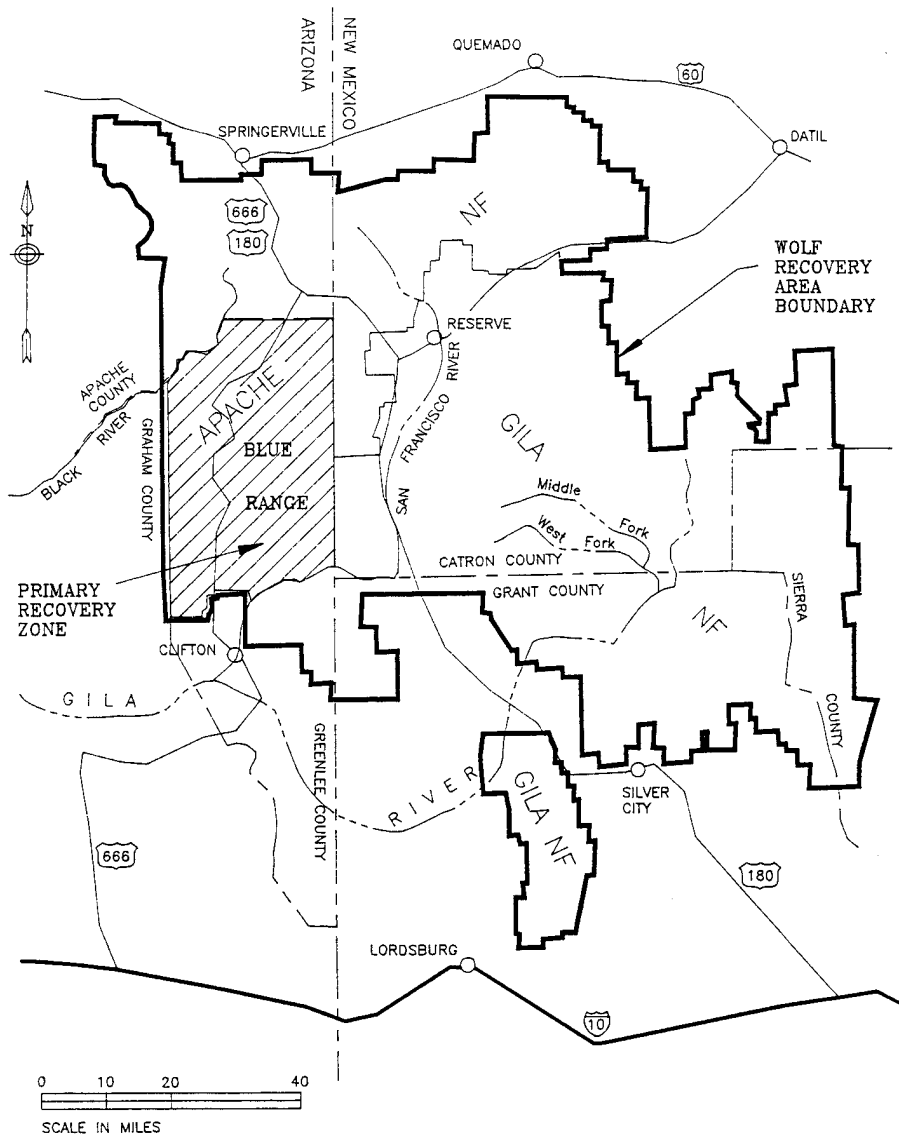
(i) The Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area includes all of the Apache National Forest and all of the Gila National Forest in east-central Arizona and west-central New Mexico (Figure 1). Initial releases of captive-raised Mexican wolves will take place, generally as described in our Preferred Alternative in the FEIS on Mexican wolf reintroduction, within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area "primary recovery zone" [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]. This is the area within the Apache National Forest bounded on the north by the Apache-Greenlee County line; on the east by the Arizona-New Mexico state line; on the south by the San Francisco River (eastern half) and the southern boundary of the Apache National Forest (western half); and on the west by the Greenlee-Graham County line (San Carlos Apache Reservation boundary). The Service will allow the wolf population to expand into the Blue Range

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Wolf Recovery Area “secondary recovery zone” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section], which is the remainder of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area not in the primary recovery zone.

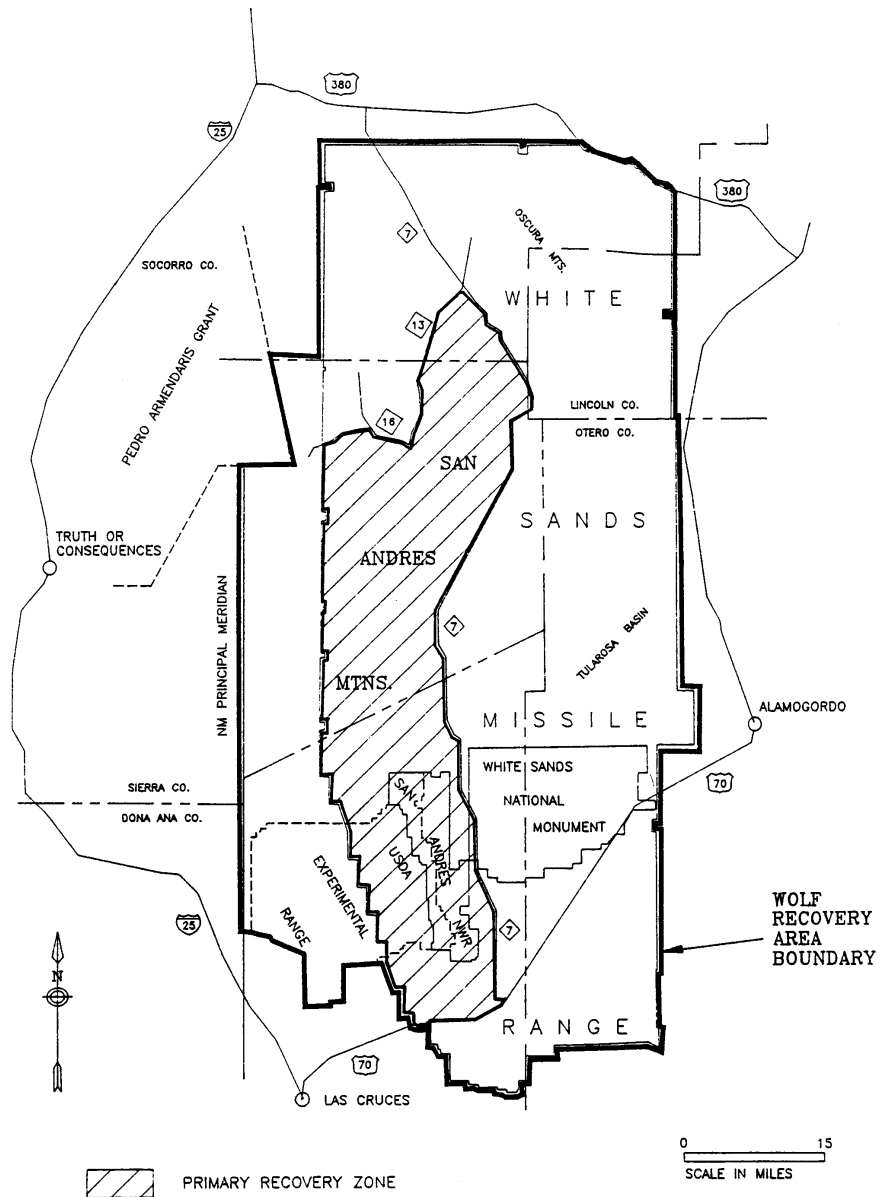
Fig. 1: Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area



(ii) The White Sands Wolf Recovery Area in south-central New Mexico includes all of the White Sands Missile Range; the White Sands National Monument; the San Andres National Wildlife Refuge; and the area adjacent and to the west of the Missile Range bounded on the south by the southerly boundary of the USDA Jornada Experimental Range and the northern boundary of the New Mexico State University Animal Science Ranch, on the west by the New Mexico Principal Meridian, on the north by the Pedro Armendaris Grant boundary and the Sierra-Socorro County line, and on the east by the western boundary of the Missile Range (Figure 2). This is the back-up reintroduction area, to be used only if later determined to be both necessary and feasible in accordance with the Preferred Alternative as set forth

in the FEIS on Mexican wolf reintroduction. If this area is used, initial releases of captive-raised wolves would take place within the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area primary recovery zone. This is the area within the White Sands Missile Range bounded on the north by the road from the former Cain Ranch Head quarters to Range Road 16, Range Road 16 to its intersection with Range Road 13, Range Road 13 to its intersection with Range Road 7; on the east by Range Road 7; on the south by Highway 70; and on the west by the Missile Range boundary. The Service would allow the wolf population to expand into the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area secondary recovery zone, which is the remainder of the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area not in the primary recovery zone.

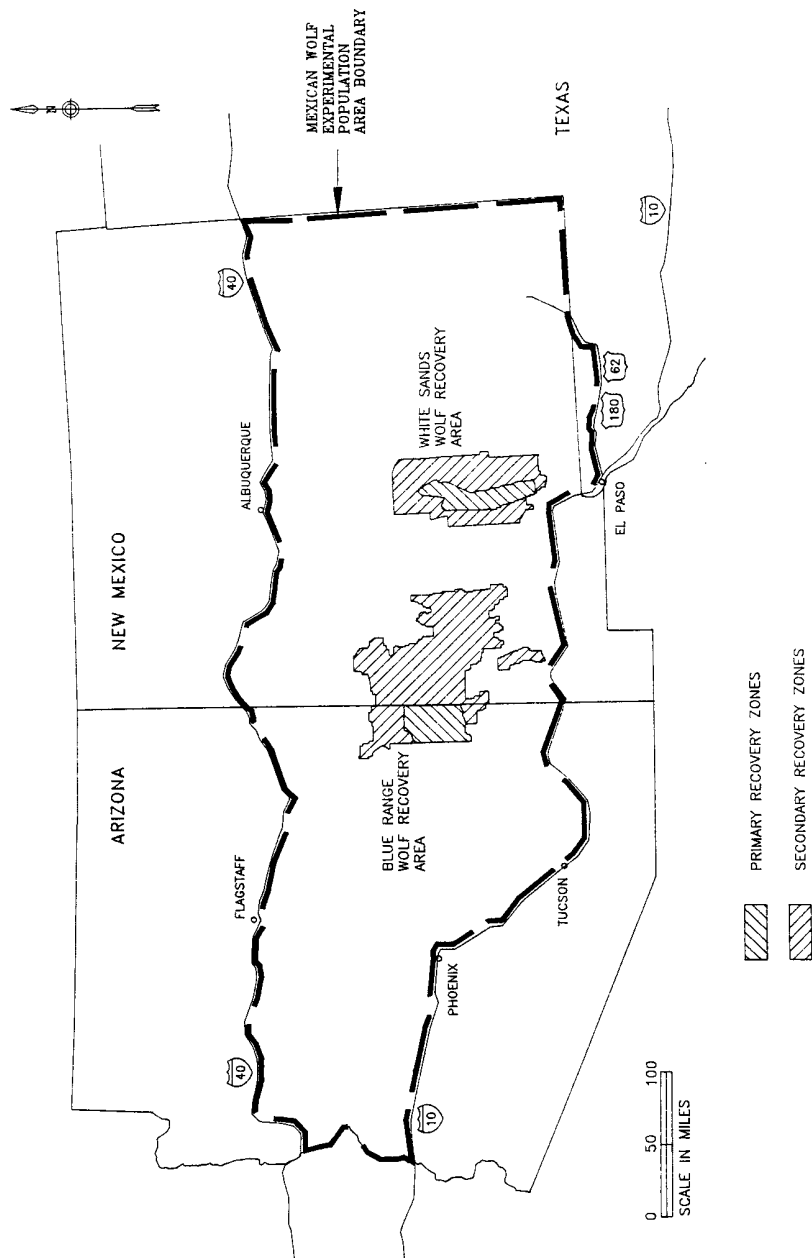
Fig. 2: White Sands Wolf Recovery Area



(iii) The boundaries of the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area are the portion of Arizona lying north of Interstate Highway 10 and south of Interstate Highway 40; the portion of New Mexico lying north of Interstate Highway 10 in the west, north of the New Mexico-Texas boundary in the east, and south of Interstate Highway 40; and the portion of Texas lying north of United States Highway 62/180 and south of the Texas-New Mexico boundary (Figure 3). The Service is not proposing wolf reestablishment throughout this area, but only within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area, and possibly later in the White Sands Wolf Recovery Area, respectively described in paragraphs (k)(9) (i) and (ii) of this section. If a member of the nonessential experimental population is captured inside the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, but outside the designated wolf recovery areas, it will be re-released within the recovery area, put into the captive population, or oth-

erwise managed according to provisions of a Service-approved management plan or action. If a wolf is found in the United States outside the boundaries of the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (and not within any other wolf experimental population area) the Service will presume it to be of wild origin with full endangered status (or threatened in Minnesota) under the Act, unless evidence, such as a radio collar, identification mark, or physical or behavioral traits (see paragraph (k)(3)(x) of this section), establishes otherwise. If such evidence exists, the Service or an authorized agency will attempt to promptly capture the wolf and re-release it within the recovery area, put it into the captive population, or carry out any other management measure authorized by this rule or a Service-approved management plan. Such a wolf is otherwise not subject to this rule outside the designated Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area.

Fig. 3: Mexican Wolf Geographic Boundaries



(10) If Mexican wolves of the experimental population occur on public lands outside the designated wolf recovery area(s), but within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, the Service or an authorized agency will attempt to capture any radio-collared lone wolf and any lone wolf or member of an established pack causing livestock “depredations” [see definition in paragraph (k)(15) of this section]. The agencies will not routinely capture and return pack members that make occasional forays onto public land outside the designated wolf recovery area(s) and uncollared lone wolves on public land. However, the Service will capture and return to a recovery area or to captivity packs from the nonessential experimental population that establish territories on public land wholly outside the designated wolf recovery area(s).

(11) If any wolves move onto private land outside the designated recovery area(s), but within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, the Service or an authorized agency will develop management actions in cooperation with the landowner including capture and removal of the wolf or wolves if requested by the landowner.

(12) If any wolves move onto tribal reservation land outside the designated recovery area(s), but within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area, the Service or an authorized agency will develop management actions in cooperation with the tribal government including capture and removal of the wolf or wolves if requested by the tribal government.

(13) The Service will evaluate Mexican wolf reintroduction progress and prepare periodic progress reports, detailed annual reports, and full evaluations after 3 and 5 years that recommend continuation, modification, or termination of the reintroduction effort.

(14) The Service does not intend to change the “nonessential experimental” designation to “essential experimental,” “threatened,” or “endangered” and foresees no likely situation which would result in such changes. Critical habitat cannot be designated under the nonessential experimental classification, 16 U.S.C. 1539(j)(2)(C)(ii).

(15) *Definitions.* Key terms used in this rule have the following definitions.

Breeding pair means an adult male and an adult female wolf that have produced at least two pups during the previous breeding season that survived until December 31 of the year of their birth.

Depredation means the confirmed killing or wounding of lawfully present domestic livestock by one or more wolves. The Service, WS, or other Service-authorized agencies will confirm cases of wolf depredation on domestic livestock.

Disturbance-causing land use activity means any land use activity that the Service determines could adversely affect reproductive success, natural behavior, or survival of Mexican wolves. These activities may be temporarily restricted within a 1-mile radius of release pens, active dens, and rendezvous sites. Such activities may include, but are not limited to—timber or wood harvesting, management-ignited fire, mining or mine development, camping outside designated campgrounds, livestock drives, off-road vehicle use, hunting, and any other use or activity with the potential to disturb wolves. The following activities are specifically excluded from this definition—

(1) Legally permitted livestock grazing and use of water sources by livestock;

(2) Livestock drives if no reasonable alternative route or timing exists;

(3) Vehicle access over established roads to private property and to areas on public land where legally permitted activities are ongoing if no reasonable alternative route exists;

(4) Use of lands within the national park or national wildlife refuge systems as safety buffer zones for military activities;

(5) Prescribed natural fire except in the vicinity of release pens; and

(6) Any authorized, specific land use that was active and ongoing at the time wolves chose to locate a den or rendezvous site nearby.

Engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting livestock means to be engaged in the pursuit and grasping, biting, attacking, wounding, or feeding upon livestock that are alive. If wolves

are observed feeding on a livestock carcass, you cannot assume that wolves killed the livestock because livestock can die from many causes and wolves will feed on carrion.

Harass means “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering” (50 CFR 17.3). This experimental population rule permits only “opportunistic, noninjurious harassment” (see definition below).

Impact on game populations in ways which may inhibit further wolf recovery. The Service encourages states and tribes to define unacceptable impacts from wolf predation on game populations in Service-approved management plans. Until such time the term will mean the following—2 consecutive years with a cumulative 35 percent decrease in population or hunter harvest estimates for a particular species of ungulate in a game management unit or distinct herd segment compared to the pre-wolf 5-year average (unit or herd must contain average of greater than 100 animals). If wolf predation is shown to be a primary cause of ungulate population declines (greater than 50 percent of documented adult or young mortality), then wolves may be moved to reduce ungulate mortality rates and assist in herd recovery, but only in conjunction with application of other common, professionally acceptable, wildlife management techniques.

Livestock means cattle, sheep, horses, mules, and burros or other domestic animals defined as livestock in State and Tribal wolf management plans approved by the Service.

Occupied Mexican wolf range means an area of confirmed presence of resident breeding packs or pairs of wolves or area consistently used by at least one resident wolf over a period of at least one month. The Service must confirm or corroborate wolf presence. Exact delineation of the area will be described by:

(1) 5-mile (8 km) radius around all locations of wolves and wolf sign confirmed as described above (nonradio-monitored);

(2) 5-mile (8 km) radius around radio locations of resident wolves when fewer than 20 radio locations are available (for radio-monitored wolves only); or

(3) 3-mile (4.8 km) radius around the convex polygon developed from more than 20 radio locations of a pack, pair, or single wolf acquired over a period of at least 6 months (for radio-monitored wolves).

This definition applies only within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area.

Opportunistic, noninjurious harassment (see “harass”) means as the wolf presents itself (for example, the wolf travels onto and is observed on private land or near livestock). This is the only type of harassment permitted by this rule. You cannot track, attract, search out, or chase a wolf and then harass it. Any harassment must not cause bodily injury or death to the wolf. The basic intent of harassment permitted by this rule is to scare wolves away from the immediate area. It is limited to approaching wolves and discharging firearms or other projectile launching devices in proximity to but not in the direction of wolves; throwing objects in the general direction of but not at wolves; or making any loud noise in proximity to wolves.

Primary recovery zone means an area where the Service—

(1) Will release captive-raised Mexican wolves,

(2) May return and re-release previously released Mexican wolves,

(3) May release translocated wild-born Mexican wolves, and

(4) Will actively support recovery of the reintroduced population.

Problem wolves means wolves that—

(1) Have depredated lawfully present domestic livestock,

(2) Are members of a group or pack (including adults, yearlings, and young-of-the-year) that were directly involved in livestock depredations,

(3) Were fed by or are dependent upon adults involved with livestock depredations (because young animals will likely acquire the pack’s livestock depredation habits),

(4) Have depredated domestic animals other than livestock on private or tribal lands, two times in an area within one year, or

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(5) Are habituated to humans, human residences, or other facilities.

Public land means land under administration of Federal agencies including, but not limited to the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, Department of Energy, and Department of Defense; and State-owned lands within the boundary of a designated wolf recovery area. All State-owned lands within the boundary of the experimental population area, but outside designated wolf recovery areas, will be subject to the provisions of this rule that apply to private lands.

Rendezvous site means a gathering and activity area regularly used by a litter of young wolf pups after they have emerged from the den. Typically, the site is used for a period ranging from about one week to one month in the summer. Several sites may be used in succession.

Secondary recovery zone means an area adjacent to a primary recovery zone in which the Service allows released wolves to disperse, where wolves captured in the wild for authorized management purposes may be translocated and released, and where managers will actively support recovery of the reintroduced population.

Take means "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct" (16 U.S.C. 1532(19)). Also, see definitions of "harass", "opportunistic, noninjurious harassment", and "unavoidable and unintentional take."

Unavoidable and unintentional take means accidental, unintentional take (see definition of "Take") which occurs despite reasonable care, is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity, and is not done on purpose. Examples would be striking a wolf with an automobile and catching a wolf in a trap outside of known occupied wolf range. Taking a wolf with a trap, snare, or other type of capture device within occupied wolf range (except as authorized in paragraph (k)(3)(ix) and (x) of this section) will not be considered unavoidable, accidental, or unintentional take, unless due care was exercised to avoid taking a wolf. Taking a wolf by shooting will not be considered unavoidable, acciden-

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tal, or unintentional take. Shooters have the responsibility to be sure of their targets.

Wolf recovery area means a designated area where managers will actively support reestablishment of Mexican wolf populations.

[49 FR 35954, Sept. 13, 1984, and 50 FR 30194, July 24, 1985, as amended at 51 FR 41797, Nov. 19, 1986; 52 FR 29780, Aug. 11, 1987; 53 FR 29337, Aug. 4, 1988; 53 FR 37580, Sept. 27, 1988; 54 FR 43969, Oct. 30, 1989; 56 FR 41488, Aug. 21, 1991; 58 FR 5657, Jan. 22, 1993; 58 FR 52031, Oct. 6, 1993; 59 FR 42711, 42714, Aug. 18, 1994; 59 FR 60279, Nov. 22, 1994; 60 FR 18947, Apr. 13, 1995; 61 FR 11332, Mar. 20, 1996; 61 FR 54057, Oct. 16, 1996; 62 FR 38939, July 21, 1997; 63 FR 1763, Jan. 12, 1998; 63 FR 52837, Oct. 1, 1998]

§ 17.85 Special rules—invertebrates. [Reserved]

§ 17.86 Special rules—plants. [Reserved]

Subpart I—Interagency Cooperation

§ 17.94 Critical habitats.

(a) The areas listed in § 17.95 (fish and wildlife) and § 17.96 (plants) and referred to in the lists at §§ 17.11 and 17.12 have been determined by the Director to be Critical Habitat. All Federal agencies must insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by them is not likely to result in the destruction or adverse modification of the constituent elements essential to the conservation of the listed species within these defined Critical Habitats. (See part 402 for rules concerning this prohibition; see also part 424 for rules concerning the determination of Critical Habitat).

(b) The map provided by the Director does not, unless otherwise indicated, constitute the definition of the boundaries of a Critical Habitat. Such maps are provided for reference purposes to guide Federal agencies and other interested parties in locating the general boundaries of the Critical Habitat. Critical Habitats are described by reference to surveyable landmarks found on standard topographic maps of the area and to the States and county(ies) within which all or part of the Critical